Polyhedron™
NEWSZINE

56
NOVEMBER-
DECEMBER

RPGA
NETWORK

©1990 TSR, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Classifieds

Alabama Serious DM and player looking for other players in the Athens, Decatur, or other areas to join or DM for beginners. Also looking for pen pals from the U.S. or overseas. Expert in the D&D® game, AD&D® game, and FORGOTTEN REALMS™ fantasy setting. I've been a player for four years and a DM for five years. All ages welcome. All letters will be answered. William Poole, Rt. 3 Box 533A, Athens, AL 35611 (misprinted as Athens, GA last issue), or call 205-232-9316.

Arizona I'm a 17-year-old male looking for a gaming group. If you're interested in having me join you, write: Elton Hicks, 3030 N. 7th St. Apt. 15, Phoenix, AZ 85014, or call 602-789-0856 and leave a message.

California I'm a mature, 15-year-old gamer looking for a group or official Network club. I play the AD&D® game and GURPS. I want to start playing Cyberpunk, Car Wars, and Warhammer Fantasy. I also would like to play Twilight 2000 or Traveller. I'm looking for pen pals, too. My other interests include sports, music (rap), PBM games, the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ fantasy setting, and others. Please write: Mike Domezio, 1824 Locust St., Napa, CA 94558.

Florida Attention all gamers in the Delray-Boca Raton area. It's time to get together. Write: Allen Hecker, 2801 S. Federal Hwy. Apt. B, Delray Beach, FL 33445.

Georgia Hello north Georgia gamers! I am currently running AD&D games and I'm looking for new players to start a campaign. Interested players call me at: 404-692-5030, or write: Justin Lee, 303 Ridgewood Rd., Jasper, GA 30143.

Indiana Adult gamer looking for active gaming group in the Terre Haute, IN area. I play and GM the AD&D game and MARVEL SUPER HEROES game, but would like to play others as well. Call Rich Haton 812-235-9020.

Missouri Attention Kansas City Network members: Now there finally is a Network club right here in KC! We're just getting started, so we need your help. We meet on the 13th of every month, but our location changes to be more convenient for our members. For information send a SASE to Alan Grimes, 1820 NE 49th St., Kansas City, MO 64118.

New York Twenty-year-old male is seeking DMs and players. I play the AD&D game and Champions. I always am willing to try new games, and am looking to form a club. Write Thomas Collison, 156-17 33rd Ave., Flushing, NY 11354, or call 718-463-0785.

New York Attention all N.Y.C. area gamers! I am a 25-year-old gamer who has been playing the AD&D game, and GAMMA WORLD® game for over 12 years. I would like to meet other gamers to form an official Network club. Please call 718-921-1671, or write: Joseph O'Neil, 729 Bayridge Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11220.

Pennsylvania I am a 14-year-old gamer interested in forming a club. I have the AD&D game, D&D® game, GAMMA WORLD game, MERP, and Shadowrun. Please write: Sean Voorhees, 712 N. Elmer Ave., Sayre, PA 18840, or call 717-888-1426.

Pennsylvania-Ohio The Circle of Swords Gaming Guild (currently the 2nd largest Network club in the nation) invites all gamers from western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio to join us on the second Saturday of each month at the Butler Public Library in Butler, PA., from Noon to 4 PM. All types of games are offered. For information write: Circle of Swords, P.O. Box 2126, Butler, PA 16003.

Wisconsin I'm looking to start or join a mature gaming group. I can meet after 5:00 p.m. almost any day. I'm interested in the D&D game, the AD&D game, STAR FRONTIERS® game, and others. Write Chris Hill, 1077 Mineral Springs Dr. #7, Port Washington, WI 53074.

General I am interested in buying rules and accessories in good condition for fantasy and science fiction role playing games. Please write: Ravindranath Sanha, 13, Mohammed Ville, El Socorro Rd., San Juan, Trinidad, West Indies.

General Character Portraits and shirts handpainted. Your art or mine. Send a SASE for more information. Sher Wolfe, 1685 S. Colorado Blvd. #S-236, Denver, CO 80222, 303-753-0928 (callers please note that I'm on Mountain Standard Time).

General Help! I've been stuck here in "Jolly England" for half my life. I'm 16 and interested in the AD&D game, the DRAGONLANCE® setting in particular. I also enjoy reading and writing fantasy. I'm looking for pen pals who can acquaint me with the various AD&D game settings—or who'll just write for the heck of it. Stephanie Anderson, P.O. Box 544, APO NY 09127.

General Are there any EVPA members in the Network? Let's share ideas for the Element Masters game. Write: Edward Tang, 7235 SE 24th St., Mercer Island, WA 98040.

General Dragonslayers Unlimited is looking for new members. We are a registered Network club dedicated to playing games by mail. We run AD&D games, DAWN PATROL® game, STAR FRONTIERS games, Arcanum, Heroes Unlimited, and others. If you appreciate play-by-mail gaming, Dragonslayers Unlimited might be for you. For information write: Dragonslayers Unlimited, c/o Bill Brierton, 3709 Pecan Ct., Waldorf, MD 20602.

General Wanted: players and GMs for the D&D game, AD&D game, MARVEL SUPER HEROES game, Star Trek, GAMMA WORLD, MERP, and DC Heroes. I also buy, trade, and sell comics, games, and computer games for the Commodore 64. Write: Robert Tomaszewski Jr., 23086 Melrose, East Detroit, MI 48021.

General Wanted: out-of-print adventures for the AD&D game. Also looking for copies of *Eldritch Wizardry* and *Swords & Spells.* Call Jason Binehart at 414-251-8384. ❑

About the Cover

Artist James Holloway portrays a disheveled paladin emerging from the wreckage of the Paladin's Rest-house. See The New Rogues Gallery to find out who brought down the building.

RPGA™ NETWORK

Publisher
Jack Beuttell

Editor
Jean Rabe

Associate Editor
Skip Williams

Graphic Director
Paul Hanchette

Cartographer
Dave Conant

Production Staff
Angelika Lokotz
Sylvia Deering
Charmaine Reynolds

©1990 TSR, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Polyhedron™ NEWSZINE

Volume 10, Number 6
Issue #56, November, 1990

SPECIAL MODULE FEATURE

6 **Winter Holiday – by Steve Hardinger**
The Giftmaster's Annual Trip could be in jeopardy. The fate of Winter Holiday festivities rests in the hands of a band of merry heroes in this adventure for the AD&D® game.
Illustrated by James Holloway.

FEATURES

19 **The New Rogues Gallery – by Laura D. Craig**
Dante, Rehyzk, and Clint are a trio your player characters should hope to avoid—especially if your PCs happen to live in ugly buildings.

22 **Small Cons And Us – by Linda M. and Donald J. Bingle**
Veteran convention-goers, the Bingles point out the highlights of attending small conventions and offer suggestions for the organizers of those events.

24 **The Living City – by John Miller and Jim Dawson**
At Black Dugal's Music Shoppe, the instruments are of the finest quality. And some produce a magical note or two.

25 **Going To Town – by Mark Easterday**
Need a town fast for your BOOT HILL® game campaign? Roll your percentile dice and a community springs up before your eyes.

28 **Word Search – by Fran Hart**
Get out your pencils and delve for words—if you're game.

29 **Game Fair Photo Page**

31 **The GEnie Unleashed – by J. Paul LaFountain**
Computer buffs can find adventure and a special offer for getting on-line.

EDITORIAL

4 **Notes From HQ – by Jean Rabe and Skip Williams**
GEN CON® Game Fair is behind us, but Winter Fantasy is just around the next turn in the dungeon corridor.

5 **Letters – from the members**

DEPARTMENTS

2 **Classified Ads**

18 **Bookwyrms – by James Lowder**
The Empires Trilogy takes readers to fantasy's Far East.

26 **The Everwinking Eye – by Ed Greenwood**
To the outsider, there isn't much to see in Maskyr's Eye. But the people are hardy souls who are worth meeting, and there is adventure to be found if you look in the right places.

Inside Front Mailer Cover – A New Ravens Bluff Contest

Notes From HQ

The Network Is Running Hot And Cold

The RPGA™ Network was hot at this past GEN CON® Game Fair. A record number of new members were recruited; attendance was up in nearly all of the Network's tournaments, so much so that there hardly ever was a table to spare in Bruce Hall; we overflowed the room at the Network members' meeting; the breakfast was a sell-out; and we sponsored more activities than ever before.

In addition to more than three dozen tournaments and seminars, the Network had its own guest of honor—Ed Greenwood—and sponsored the Miniatures Painting Competition, the Art Show and Auction, and the Masquerade. We also had a Frequent Gamer Line where RPGA Network members who had pre-registered for the convention could bypass the infamously long Game Fair check in lines and get into the shorter Members Only line. We also sold generic tickets out of the line and let people sign up for the Network there. We signed up nearly 200 new members at the convention!

In the Jade Monkey Benefit tournament, the Network raised $1,600 for the Okada, Ltd. Hearing Guide Dog Program. Okada is based in Fontana, WI, and it draws its name from an Indian word meaning "asking for a place." Okada takes in stray dogs and dogs from pounds and animal shelters, and trains them to assist deaf people.

Randy Moering, and his dog, Kim, attended the GEN CON Game Fair awards ceremony to accept the donation. Randy, who is deaf, explained that Kim wakes him up every morning when the alarm goes off, lets him know if a smoke alarm is buzzing, brings him to the door if someone is knocking, and alerts him to other important sounds. When Randy was called up on stage at the Game Fair, Kim jumped up to the podium right away to let Randy know someone wanted him.

Another highlight of the convention was the Members Meeting Wednesday night before tournaments began. Because this is the Network's 10th year in operation, we celebrated a little. We had an anniversary cake that measured 6′ long by about 3 ½′ wide. Even the huge crowd of gamers couldn't finish all that cake in one night, so a group of stalwart members lugged it up to the hotel's walk-in freezer. On the way there, they contended with a deceptively small freight elevator and a narrow, twisting service corridor littered with cleaning supplies. Late the next morning a second crew of volunteers wrestled the remaining cake back downstairs and into the Network lounge, where convention-hungry gamers made short work of it.

Attendees at the meeting also were treated to skits put on by Network clubs competing in the Gaming Decathlon. All the skits were entertaining and ranged from the Evansville Gaming Guild portraying gaming dice to MGM Grand acting out the roles of fictional characters riding on a train (where Superman happened to be a passenger), to the grand prize winners—ARC Fellowship — who showed that characters don't always agree with their players' decisions. Costuming ranged from posterboard signs to elaborate medieval garb, but member Wayne Straiton sported the most striking stage dress — actually dress isn't *quite* the right word. It was more like a skirt (at least he's got the legs for it), topped off with an oversized bra. All in all, it was the most outrageous example of cross-gender dressing the HQ staff had seen. (And we've got pictures to prove it.)

The Game Fair was a success for the Network because of the hard work of the members. Chris Schon of Chicago, who was in charge of Network HQ, spent the entire convention scoring tournaments, answering questions, and making sure that everything ran smoothly. Marshals Mike Selinker, Bill Sherman, John Vaccaro, Rob Nicolls, Doug Behringer, and Steve Morrow sent people to gaming tables in record time. Tim Beach, a Network member who took a break from campaigning for an Iowa State Representative seat, worked feverishly in HQ to make sure events were scored in time for posting advancements. Todd Kaiser, Gary Haynes, Wes Nicholson, Robert Farnsworth, Ed Peterson, Randall Lemon, Walt Baas, Kira Glass, Mitzi Young, Greg Schwartz, Cheryl Schwartz, and many others worked throughout the convention to make sure other convention attendees had a good time.

Lori and Lee Maile of MGM Grand, a dedicated crew from the Evansville Gaming Guild, and other willing members staffed the Network's Frequent Gamer Line Wednesday through Saturday of the convention.

Rembert Parker, our Regional Director from Florida, took charge of the masquerade for the third year running. Member Dave Zenz of Milwaukee supervised the Miniatures Painting Competition. And Liz and Gary M. Williams of Tennessee did a superb job handling the Art Show and Auction, which was bigger than ever before.

Many, many other Network members worked to make the RPGA Network's presence at the Game Fair felt. Network HQ's heartfelt thanks go to every volunteer who we couldn't mention in this column, and to our tournament authors and approximately 250 tournament judges.

The Network shone at the Game Fair simply because of all the hard-working members. Together we can make GEN CON Game Fair '91 even better.

Think Cold!

The RPGA Network's own convention, Winter Fantasy, will be held Jan. 4-6 at the Ramada Inn Convention Center near the Milwaukee airport. We are looking for game masters for the AD&D® game, TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game, Torg, Star Wars, Paranoia, and more. The convention also features an RPGA Network Club Competition. See the inside front mailer cover of the U.S. version of this Newszine for more information.

If you are planning to come to Winter Fantasy, pre-register early. Our site space is limited, and—if necessary—we will limit attendance.

RPGA Network Clubs

Our Network clubs are becoming more active and more numerous. We have special club competitions at conventions, an annual Gaming Decathlon open to clubs only, and playtesting available for a variety of game systems.

Continued on page 30

Letters

Housekeeping

Thanks for printing the article on the *Ars Magica* game and Lion Rampant in issue #54. It's nice to know that the RPGA™ Network services the entire role-playing game industry. However, when I read the article I noticed one change that is rather large, and I wanted to let your readers know about it. Lion Rampant's address in Georgia is:

Lion Rampant
3264 Nature's Walk
Suwanee, GA 30174

The address printed in the article is incorrect. This change happened after press time, but I felt that Network members would like to know as soon as possible.

Also, I am pleased to announce that Lion Rampant is extending the standard 10% RPGA Network discount to cover our products. This discount is effective only on mail order or convention sales. Please include your membership number with your order when claiming the discount.

Lion Rampant views the RPGA Network as an important part of the gaming community and we want to continue to give it special attention.

Lisa Stevens
Vice President of Operations
Lion Rampant

Thanks for the up-to-date information and the kind words, Lisa. The Newszine always is interested in hard information about role-playing products and the people who make them. Game manufacturers interested in seeing feature articles about their companies and products in the Newszine should contact Jean Rabe or Skip Williams at the address shown on the mailer cover.

The discount program now includes Lion Rampant, 54° 40' Orphyte, Data East/Draconian Games, and TSR, Inc. (including TSR Ltd. in the U.K. and Jedco Games in Australia).

***Note To Members:** If you answered Lion Rampant's request for feedback in issue #54, but had your letter returned, please try the updated address.*

A Matter of Experience

First, I must tell you how much I enjoy the Newszine. I especially like the AD&D® game adventures, and I often use them when I run a game on short notice. I have a couple of questions about them, though.

Would it be possible to list where more information about the monsters can be found? *The Charleston Academy* in issue #42 had a Nonafel. I can't find a listing for this critter anywhere. This makes awarding XP for defeating it pretty tough. Also, how about including experience listings for the NPCs in an adventure? For now, I've developed a random system for awarding XP for defeated characters. It is based on the number of XP the character has and gives a PC a pretty good chance to advance a level if the die roll is high enough.

Douglas Jaffery
Telkwa, BC CANADA

We're glad you find the adventures useful. The Nonafel is listed in the Fiend Folio *page 68.*

If you take a look at this issue's adventure, Winter Holiday, *you'll see that we're using a new format for monster statistics that includes an XP value. We're now also including XP values for NPCs. The format is the same one that TSR, Inc. uses in its published modules.*

Most AD&D game creatures that see print in the Newszine now are included in the various Monstrous Compendiums *from TSR, Inc. Check the indexes on the* Compendiums' *opening pages to find out which monsters are included.*

Your variable XP award system for defeated NPCs sounds interesting, but the "correct" procedure is to calculate the award based on the defeated character's hit dice and abilities, just as you would for any other "monster." Rules for doing this are on page 47 of the current Dungeon Master's Guide *and on page 85 of the original DMG, for those of you who still are playing the original AD&D game.* ❑

POLYHEDRON™ Newszine (the official newsletter of TSR Inc.'s ROLE PLAYING GAME ASSOCIATION™ Network) is published bi-monthly by TSR, Inc. The mailing address for all correspondence is: P.O. Box 515, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. Telephone: (414)248-3625.

POLYHEDRON Newszine is mailed free to all RPGA™ Network members. US membership rates are $15 per year (bulk mail delivery only); Canadian rates are $22; foreign rates are $25 per year (surface mail) or $45 per year (air mail). All prices are subject to change without notice. Changes of address for the delivery of membership materials must be received at least 30 days prior to the effective date of the change to ensure uninterrupted delivery.

POLYHEDRON Newszine welcomes unsolicited submissions of written material and artwork that are accompanied by our Standard Disclosure Form. No responsibility for such submissions can be assumed by the publisher in any event. No submission will be returned unless it is also accompanied by a self-adressed, stamped envelope of sufficient size.

Unless special arrangements to the contrary are made prior to publication, materials submitted to the publisher for publication in POLYHEDRON Newszine are accepted solely upon the condition that the materials may be edited and published in POLYHEDRON Newszine or used in RPGA™ Network sanctioned tournaments, conventions and events without cost to the publisher. TSR and the RPGA Network shall make no other use of the materials unless TSR and the author or artist enter into a written agreement regarding such use.

TSR grants to prospective authors a non-exclusive right to use copyrighted materials of TSR in their submissions to TSR. An author, however, shall have no right to publish or to permit someone other than TSR to publish a submission that includes any copyrighted materials of TSR without first obtaining the written permission of TSR to do so.

All letters addressed to the RPGA Network or to TSR, Inc., will be considered as submissions and may be printed in whole or in part at the discretion of the editor unless the sender specifically requests otherwise in writing.

Unless otherwise stated, the opinions expressed in POLYHEDRON Newszine are those of the individual authors, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of TSR, Inc., the RPGA Network, or its staff.

Standard Disclosure Forms, POLYHEDRON Writing Guidelines, Tournament Request Forms, Membership Forms, Club Forms, and Classified Ad Forms are available from Network HQ.

® designates registered trademarks owned by TSR, Inc.
™ designates trademarks owned by TSR, Inc.

Most other product names are trademarks owned by the companies publishing those products. Use of the name of any product without mention of trademark status should not be construed as a challenge to such status.

©1990 TSR, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Winter Holiday

A Festive AD&D® Game adventure for 4–6 characters, levels 7–9

Illustrations by James Holloway

by Steven A. Hardinger

Background for the DM

On the Twelfth day of Winter Holiday,
The DM Wished On Me:

Twelve dragons drumming,
Eleven bulls a-piping,
Ten racoons a-leaping,
Nine babies can sting,
Eight shades a-milking,
Seven swamis swimming,
Six geese melee-ing,
Five golden rings,
Four colliebirddogs,
Three French Horns,
Two turtledoves,
and a porridge in a pair tree.

Dungeon Masters' Background

Dragon (an evil elven wizard) has formed GRINCH (GRoup Intent on Crushing Holidays) with the purpose of disrupting the joys of Winter Holiday. To aid in this, Dragon has enlisted the help of Bull (a half-orc fighter) and Racoon (a human thief).

Dragon convinced The Giftmaster (TG, for short) that she is a retired guild leader for a large wizards' guild on an alternate plane and was seeking some gainful employment for her golden years. (But a gold dragon she is not.) She further explained that a management team, brought in from the outside, would free TG to concentrate more on his Annual Trip. TG readily agreed, wanting only for Winter Holiday to be more joyful for all those involved on the receiving end. GRINCH quickly was established in this managerial capacity at the North Pole Facility, and began to spread rumors and stories amongst the toymakers, in the hopes of creating unrest. This storytelling was highly successful. Ever in tune with his employees, TG also became infected with the growing anxiety.

Although TG initially welcomed the aid of Dragon and her associates, he has become suspicious of their qualifications, if not their intent. The year leading up to this Winter Holiday has run a bit more smoothly than usual, but not due to any actions of Dragon. Furthermore, the average overhead cost per child (OCPC) has risen an unprecedented 5.4%. This seems directly linked to Dragon's introduction of rather annoying and unproductive committees among the toymakers. The toymakers

spend time in meetings and reading little red books instead of carving wooden unicorns and weaving holly baskets. Lately TG has been much too busy with his compilation of the Naughty/Nice Roster to give much thought to the problem, but the appearance of the PC party (with unknown intent) drives TG over the edge. He flees to his adopted cousin, R.S. Claws, for help, shortly after the scenario starts.

GRINCH has "invited" (via the pair tree in the first encounter) the party to act as "security" for TG's Annual Trip. Dragon feels that she can convince (or if needed, trick) the party into destroying TG in the process. When encountering the pair tree, the party is on the way to a "con," at which they expect to participate in a variety of swords-and-sorcery contests, games, and events. Some of the party members may even get to act out a favorite fantasy: role-playing an unskilled and uneducated peasant.

Players' Introduction

Finally! After long months of adventuring, you opt to take a much-needed vacation—five days of contests, games, and seminars at a gathering with hundreds (or maybe thousands) of other adventurers. Expectations of success in the coming tournaments run high. The party has been on the road for almost two days; the sky has been cloudless and the sun pleasantly warm. Except for an occasional little side trip to explore caves and climb trees, it has been an uneventful and relaxing stroll—just a perfect start for a perfect vacation. The sounds of birds singing and frogs dying, er, croaking, fills the early morning air. Continuing down the road you have been following for the last several hours, you find yourselves in a huge and picturesque river valley filled with an immense orchard. Fruit trees of all types stretch as far as the eye can see. Hundreds of pear trees, arranged in precise rows, grow in the acres directly in front of you. The road continues through the trees and off into the distance.

Encounter 1—A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Con

As you continue through the lush orchard, you notice that one of the trees on your left is rather strange. It is a huge, gnarled old pear tree. Surely one might expect to see a bird or a cat in such a tree, but a bowl? Sure enough, your double take reveals that way up there, in the uppermost branches, is a big brown porcelain bowl.

The tree is easily climbable, and the branches will hold anyone who does so, although the poor tree will shake and bend if a burly priest or warrior attempts the climb. Anyone who gets both feet off the ground and into the tree notices that the brown bowl, climber, and everything else in the tree (except the tree itself) appears double. That is because this is a magical pair tree. The bowl is about eight inches in diameter and contains alphabet porridge. There is sufficient porridge in the bowl for two good-sized helpings (or one halfling helping). But only a taste is needed to induce its magical effect (see below). The porridge can be removed slowly (i.e., spooned or scooped), but will not fall out by itself even if the bowl is dumped, thrown, etc. However, jostling the bowl makes some porridge slop over the sides—the bowl could make a real mess if placed in a pack.

Anyone gazing into the porridge sees the letters floating in the goop align themselves into words—thanks to Larry the Leprechaun, who is hiding nearby and watching the party. The initial message reads: "Please help (stop). Eat pear (stop). Merry (stop)."

The pears are large and plump, have a healthy yellow color, and are sweet and crunchy. The pears and the porridge, but not the tree, radiate strong magic if detection is attempted. Eating a pear teleports the eater (and the pear core) to the North Pole Facility (see encounter #2). Do not reveal the fate of the teleported PCs until all have eaten a pear; this will help keep the party from wandering off in separate directions.

It is Larry's job to see that all in the party partake in these pleasant pomes; he will use signs in the porridge, illusions, or other tricks to get the PCs to taste the paired pears. If the PCs wonder out loud about the situation, Larry answers their questions—probably by using his illusions to form words in the porridge. However, he will not reveal any names or Winter Holiday-related details, such as The Giftmaster's name or the location of those who have eaten pears. "Merry" is a common way for TG to sign correspondence, but the party could believe this to be the name of the sender of the message. Have fun letting the party carry on a conversation with a bowl of porridge.

The porridge itself is incredibly bitter; if tasted, a save vs. death must be made. Failure indicates an overwhelming (and irresistible) urge to clear one's palate with the nearest sweet (i.e. an entire pear); success indicates it's just lousy porridge. A saving throw is required for every bite taken.

Leprechaun (1): Int Exceptional; AL N; AC 8; MV 15; HD 2–5 hp; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA *invisibility, polymorph non-living objects, create illusion, ventriloquism* (all at will); SD cannot be surprised due to excellent hearing; MR 80%; SZ T (2' tall); ML 11; XP 270.

Larry knows nothing of GRINCH except Dragon's name and looks. He only knows (or cares) that Dragon supplies him with a few gold pieces, a mug of grog, and occasional victims for practical jokes and tricks.

Encounter 2—'Twas the Knight Before Winter Holiday

This encounter takes place in the Administrative Building (see map 1).

A. Sitting Room

After biting into the pear, and a brief feeling that your stomach is in Upper Slobovia while your feet are in Lesser Morunk, you notice that you are no longer in that pleasant pome place, the orchard valley. Instead, you are now in a large, well-appointed room, obviously a sitting room. The trappings of this cozy chamber are all brass and dark mahogany; a roaring fireplace completes the scene. The room is about 20' by 40' and has three doors. The center of the chamber is occupied by a large table covered with bowls, platters, and flagons of all types. The table and its utensils hold an incredible array of fine food and drink. The

chamber is lit by a stunning brass and cut-glass chandelier. Under the table is a lavishly-carved wooden garbage can.

Regardless of the time or order in which the PCs eat the pears, they arrive here simultaneously, still clutching their half-eaten pears. By the time the entire party has arrived there are about 30 hours left in the countdown to the start of TG's Annual Trip. The status of the countdown is known by everyone employed at the North Pole Facility.

Everything in this chamber is as it appears. The food is incredibly delicious. The garbage in the can—a few banana peels—is fresh and still cool to the touch. Bull was just in here for a snack. This should alert a quick player that someone is nearby.

B. Tunnel to Main Complex

The corridor is 10' wide by 10' high. It dips gently at first, but rises again 50 yards or so in the distance. It is lit by torches in iron wall sconces every 30' on opposite walls. As you travel down the corridor, you can hear a small, male voice humming a tune.

The tune is some appropriate Winter Holiday song (judge's choice) and belongs to Larry the Leprechaun (again). Larry's job here is to get the party turned around and through the right door in the sitting room. Larry will only say that their potential employers lie in the direction from which they came. Larry ate a pear, too, and used his *invisibility* and illusions to cover his exit from the Sitting Room (encounter 2a). You are encouraged to add any detail to this encounter that might be fun (remember, Larry is a playful, harmless, cute little leprechaun), such as giving Larry an armful of presents or more food for the sitting room table. If the party insists on moving toward the main complex, Larry uses illusions to make a section of corridor look ice encrusted. If the PCs walk under the ice, Larry stages a dramatic cave-in that nearly buries the party and completely blocks the corridor with broken ice; otherwise this can be a short encounter.

C. Storage Closet

The room beyond the door is steeped in shadows. You are just about to reach for your holy symbols when you realize that it's just dark in here. In the dim light from the chandelier in the sitting room, you can see that this narrow room is packed with long shelves stacked high with boxes, sacks, and barrels of all sorts.

The boxes contain office supplies and other administrative materials. Deeper in the closet are old records, mostly Naughty/Nice Rosters and other similar papers. Lengthy searching reveals eight tigerskins, used when GRINCH ventures outside the complex. If the party wastes much time exploring the closet, a visit from Larry the Leprechaun may be useful to speed the PCs along.

D. GRINCH Council Chamber

The double doors are ornately carved mahogany with deeply polished brass fittings and adorned with beautiful holly wreaths loaded with little red berries. As you approach, three murmuring voices can be heard:

Female voice (elven accent): "They should be here by now."

Deep male voice (orcish accent): "Maybe they got lost."

Female voice: "I surely hope that is not the case; Larry better not have screwed up again."

Male and female voices (human accents): "Yes. Right. Absolutely."

Sounds of eating mask the remainder of the conversation.

When the party opens the double doors:

The room beyond has the same brass and mahogany appointments as seen before. Seated at a large curved table at the opposite end of the room are three humanoids. At the center sits a lanky, but comely, female elf, with an elongated but otherwise blunt nose. She is wearing shimmering, almost scaly, deep-red robes. To her left is the biggest and perhaps most muscular half-orc you've ever seen. On the elf's other side is a middle-aged human woman, unremarkable in all aspects, save the mask-like birthmark over her eyes. As you take all of this in, the elven woman rises and speaks. Hers is the voice you heard first at the double doors. She says: "Ah, welcome! Welcome to the North Pole Facility, Winter Holiday Central and home of this plane's greatest and most generous creature, The Giftmaster (TG to his friends). I am called Dragon, and these are my associates: Bull," she indicates the half-orc, "and Racoon," indicating the human woman. "Please be comfortable, take a seat! We are the modest administrative wing of TG's operation, dealing with the economic and logistic aspects of his Annual Trip. Bull handles the physical plant details—maintenance and so forth, while my colleague Racoon is responsible for worker relations and payroll. I handle everything else, such as the reason that you all have been invited here. That reason is security, the security of Winter Holiday."

Allow the PCs to take all this in and to consider their feelings about Winter Holiday.

Dragon continues: "The six of you have been invited here to insure that this year's Annual Trip proceeds smoothly. Normally, this would be a rather simple request, as no one ever has interfered with TG's midwinter dole-out. The problem lies with TG himself. You see, the old man is getting on in years and appears somewhat senile. Racoon, Bull, and I have discussed this matter in some detail, and we feel that Winter Holiday itself may be in danger. TG will need a security force—that is, yourselves—to guide him and help him along the right track so that all of the gifts for the Nice little girls and boys may be distributed quickly, efficiently, and equitably. Imagine the anguish in the hearts of millions of children if TG's trip fails. His reputation would be ruined. The consequences might be most grave. So, what do you say: would you like the job?"

Full descriptions of Dragon, Bull, and Racoon are given at the end of encounter 13. During this encounter, Dragon will be exceptionally cordial to the party and will be very careful of what she says. She needs the PCs to fulfill her grand plan to disrupt Winter Holiday.

The players probably will ask many questions. Make up any answers that

are consistent with the scenario and the general legends about Winter Holiday, and that will help convince the PCs to take the assignment.

Dragon might give any of the following answers (note that while none of these comments are entirely true, none are outright lies, so they remain undetected by common divinations that detect falsehoods).

*TG's recent behavior as been odd and inexplicable. Dragon feels he might do something truly distasteful if left alone. She has a terrible feeling about this year's Annual Trip.

*All the toy makers also have bad feelings. They still love TG, but are becoming increasingly unhappy and inefficient.

* Dragon believes anybody can make the Annual Trip if necessary.

*TG is not likely to allow anyone to use his magical Sleigh and Reindeer, an item essential to the Annual Trip.

Dragon will offer the party any apparently reasonable payment, but it must be asked for. She will also assure the party that she possesses the means for their return home, but it cannot be used until at least 48 hours after the party's arrival on this plane. If the PCs want to interview other staff members of the North Pole Facility, Dragon explains that all of the higher-level manager and toymaker-types are far too busy, given that this is Winter Holiday Eve Eve, and the start of the Annual Trip is about 48 hours away. If the party persists in this vein, let them conduct a brief interview with a janitor.

The janitor, a human named Bryan, suffers from a hacking cough and is totally awed to be summoned into GRINCH's presence. The only useful information Bryan can provide is that he has an anxious feeling that something unknown, but related to the Annual Trip, is terribly wrong.

If the party is incredibly bright and figures out about the present teleporter (see sleigh description in encounter 4), Dragon states she knows of no such device, and she doesn't know how TG carries all the presents. The party is not allowed the rapid access to the sleigh enjoyed by Larry (see encounter 11a, Intermission).

If the party asks for any aid (magic or mundane), Dragon apologetically informs them that nothing is available, unless they want some toys (but to take those might deprive some child who has been waiting all year). Enterprising PCs, however, may stock up on food from the Sitting Room or office supplies from the Closet.

When the PCs have agreed to take the assignment (or when you think the negotiation with GRINCH has gone on long enough), read the following:

> In the middle of your conversation with Dragon and her associates, a small humanoid, perhaps a cross between a pixie and halfling, his coveralls coated with sawdust and paint, rushes in and hands a slip of paper to Dragon. As she reads, her face becomes grim. "Bad news," she says. "Bad news indeed, my friends. It seems that TG's senility is worse than we thought. Just a few moments ago, it was discovered that he took the Sleigh and Reindeer and flew south. We don't know where he went or for what reason, but he must be brought back to the North Pole Facility at all costs so that Winter Holiday can go on. Actually, only the Sleigh and Deer are critical, as there are alternate drivers available. To repeat, the Sleigh and Reindeer must be returned at any cost. Here are eight doses of magic eggnog, which will allow you to fly almost as fast as the Sleigh and to see the twinkling silver trail left by the Sleigh." She gives you eight flagons containing the potion and leads you toward the exit.

The magic eggnog allows variable flight speed (base move up to 1,024) for sufficient time to reach R. S. Claws' island (encounter 4). Furthermore, a very high degree of maneuverability is provided: square turns, hovering, air brakes, and power dives are all available.

If the PCs ask for protection from the cold, Dragon gives each of them a tigerskin from the closet. These are adequate protection, but they clash loudly with anything a particularly style-conscious PC might wear.

Encounter 3—On the Second Day of Winter Holiday

> So far, the flight south has been uneventful. It has been an absolute thrill (and a bit frightening) to fly at such incredible speeds while following the twinkling, silvery trail left by the Sleigh and Reindeer. After a few hours of this, though, it has gotten a bit boring. It looks like that's about to change, however; ahead are two large shapes moving to intersect the trail. As you close rapidly, the shapes resolve themselves into huge turtles with white-feathered wings. One of the creatures is equipped with a large leather case.

After all this flight time, the terrain has changed to swamp. The party has one round to react before the turtledoves close to attack. The PCs will quickly discover that they must slow to normal flying speeds (36 or less) to avoid overshooting a target. Spell casters must slow before casting, otherwise they might fly into their own areas of effect.

The turtledoves are aggressive and fight until destroyed, but the party may simply choose to fly past the hapless turtledoves, which cannot catch up. The doves will, however, get one attack at −4 as the party flies past.

Turtledoves (2): Int Low; AL N; AC 2 (top), 5 (head, wings, and underside); MV 6, Fl 15 (C); HD 7+7; hp 31 each; THAC0 12; #AT 1; Dmg 2–8; SA bite inflicts serenity, victim must save vs. paralyzation or refrain from hostile actions for 1d4+1 melee rounds; SZ H (6′ Diameter); ML 11; XP 1400 each.

Turtledoves are known to fill their lairs with gaudy, hollow glass balls. Dead turtledoves continue to float, thus the shells of these creatures are highly prized as components for potions of flying and other similar magics. One of the turtledoves carries a large leather case, which contains three musical horns made of shiny brass tubing formed into a circular coil.

Encounter 4—My Deer Friends

> The flight south continues into warm, tropical regions. Soon you find yourselves over an ocean. The sight of the fiery orange-red sunset reflected on the brilliant blue water is spectacular. The water is incredibly clear: even from this altitude, large aquatic creatures and colonies of multi-colored coral growing on the ocean floor are clearly visible. The

trail left by the Sleigh and Reindeer descends toward a small but lush tropical island just ahead. As you get closer to this island, the trail can be seen to end amongst extensive and obviously very old stone ruins in a large clearing. Grazing within the clearing are 10 reindeer. The Sleigh is nowhere in sight.

The ruins are ancient and almost completely crumbled, with only two recognizable structures: the well and the bakery. Both of these structures hide an entrance to R. S. Claws' lair. The well is generic: about 5' in diameter, easily climbable on the inside (convenient hand and foot holes have been graciously provided, and are visible when looked for). The surface of the cold, murky water lies 50' from the top of the well. Halfway down the well is a 3' diameter tunnel leading to the lair (see map 3 and encounter 5). To allow persons of large bulk (i.e., TG) entrance, the tunnel expands as needed to accommodate the crawler.

The bakery is the only structure remaining in the ruins which resembles a building. The west (front) wall is almost gone, but the rest of the structure is still sound. It contains rotten tables, rusted metal cooking implements, a huge oven, and the Sleigh (see description below). The oven's chimney is an impressive stone edifice, 20' high and 6' square on the outside. The top of the chimney can be reached by climbing the stonework. The flue is 4' square, sufficient in size to allow entrance by a large humanoid, and is topped by a rusty iron cap. The inside of the chimney is surprisingly clean and has a metal ladder to allow one to climb down. About 45' down in the interior of the chimney is the entrance to Claws' lair (see map 3 and encounter 5). Also in the bakery is the *sleigh of delivery.* TG flew it through the remnants of the front wall before rushing to Claw's lair via the bakery chimney; how else would TG make an entrance?

Sleigh of Delivery: Upon casual inspection, the *sleigh* appears to be a normal vehicle with exceptionally bright red and green paint. However, when one sits in the driver's seat a complex array of buttons, dials, and lights appear. The *sleigh* is actually a highly sophisticated device (thus GRINCH's interest), requiring a small platinum key to operate. Attempting to operate or molest the *sleigh* or control panel when the key is not in the appropriate slot requires a save vs. death magic at −4. Failure indicates the victim has fallen into a deep sleep, appearing dead, for one turn. During this sleep the victim has strange and vivid dreams of sweetened plums cavorting about. If hitched to the full team of reindeer, the *sleigh* travels at phenomenal rates (often exceeding a base move of 1,000 and including instantaneous travel), so that TG can quickly distribute presents to millions of households and halfling holes and (more importantly) get home early. With a full team, the *sleigh* is maneuverability class A. Without deer, the *sleigh* moves at 48, and is maneuverability class C. The rumble seat is especially spacious, being a receiving area for teleportation of presents from the North Pole Facility. The teleport feature is one way—from the North Pole Facility to the *sleigh.*

The reindeer are grazing near the jungle's edge. During this encounter, the deer are suspicious of the PCs, but otherwise friendly and curious. The reindeer try to convince the party to stop pursuit. Obviously, the deer will fail in this. When pressed, the deer grudgingly reveal that the entrance to Claws' lair is "well-hidden," and easy to find if one "wets awhile" (see encounter 5). If the players are slow to get useful information from the reindeer, the deer offer to trade secrets. Whomever in the party reveals the deepest, most sensitive secret (within character), will be told the clues to the entrance.

Reindeer (10): Int High; AL Goody-goody; AC 4; MV 12, Fl 36 (B) (when the whole team is hitched to the *sleigh of delivery* travel can be instantaneous); HD 8; hp 33 each; THAC0 12; #AT 3; Dmg 1–4/1–4/1–6; SA if both front hooves hit, the back hooves also can attack (1–4/1–4); SD immune to fear, depression, or similar mental fogs, but have some difficulty flying through other fogs unless Rudolf is present; SZ L (no wimps for TG); ML 11; XP 1400 each

Just a reminder: Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen, Rudolf, and Buck. Furthermore, common myths are inaccurate as to the correct size of TG's herd: it actually contains 10, not nine, Deer. The lesser-known member of the sleigh schlepers is Buck, who usually stays at the North Pole Facility and does the group's accounting. However, bored of the books, Buck has decided to seek a bit of adventure. So far he's having a great time.

Encounter 5—And They're Here on R.S. Claws' Island

Important Notes:

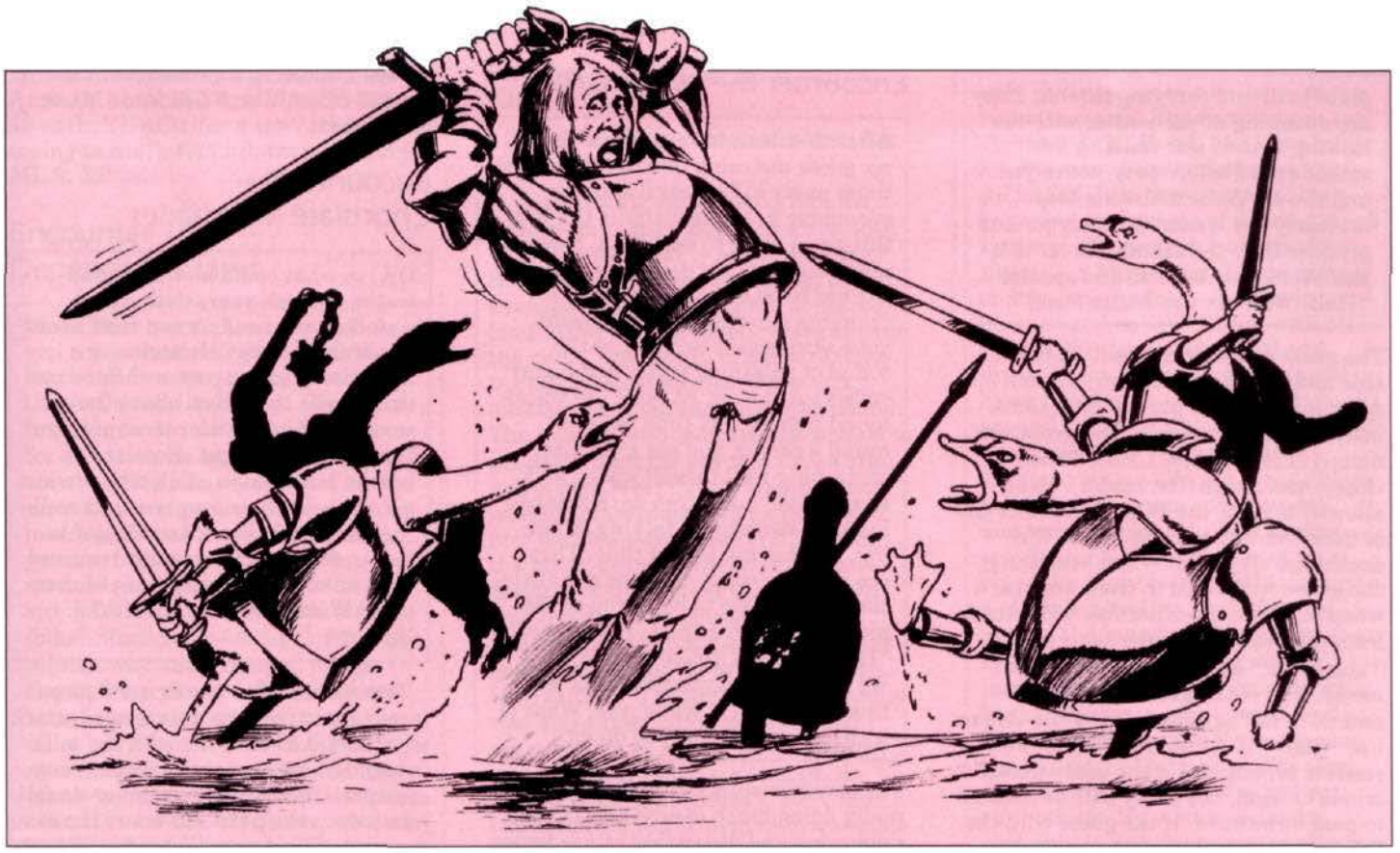
A. The PCs will not notice the secret door in this room, even if they look for it.

B. The Eggnog Potion duration expires as the PCs enter this room.

Your crawl (or slide, if entrance is from the chimney) ends in a large chamber illuminated by torchlight. In the far corner is an archway filled with a shimmering gold and green pattern. The arch itself has rather unusual stonework, being a rounded "M" shape and constructed of red- and white-striped stone blocks. Four large, brown and white dogs with slender heads, pointed muzzles, and long, silky fur, lie next to the archway. Since you started on this assignment, you've gotten used to some weird things, so the feathered wings on the dogs are no surprise. After a few seconds, two of the collies rise, open their jaws in huge, sleepy yawns, and approach.

This room is the first element in Claws' security system. Nobody can pass through the arch while carrying magic items or while magical effects (potions, spells, etc) are operating. Conjured or summoned creatures are real (for purposes of this encounter), not magical effects, so they can pass through. Extradimensional spaces (such as *bags of holding*), however, are magic items and cannot pass the arch. Nothing the PCs or collies can do will alter the archway's impermeability.

The dogs are colliebirddogs. Claws placed them here to explain the archway to would-be visitors and to safeguard the magic items left behind. The dogs' names are Spot, Blotch, Stain, and Spill. At some point in the ensuing conversation, the colliebirddogs reveal what they are and what their job is. They are friendly, cheerful, and inquisitive (although not particularly trustworthy, loyal, brave, or reverent). The dogs don't get many visitors, and they want to get a little something from the PCs besides conversation. They hint that



some Winter Holiday spirits (meaning the remaining Eggnog) would be real nice. Besides, they'll probably find it and drink it while the PCs are gone anyway.

Colliebirddogs (4): Int Avg.; AL N; AC 4; MV 15, Fl 30 (D); HD 7; hp 31 each; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1–6; SA Can recite "Twas the Night Before Winter Holiday" at will, this soliloquy has the effect of an *enthrall* spell cast at 8th level except that any creature can be affected; SD *detect magic* once a turn; SZ M; ML 12; XP 975 each.

Encounter 6—Ring In The New Year

As you approach this door, the sound of ringing bells is noticeable.

Pause for player actions, if any.

With the door open, the source of the din, now much louder, is visible: the room contains many matching sets of bells. Each set contains five bells which ring simultaneously. The bells ring one set at a time, but in a random pattern. The bells are of all shapes and sizes, from tiny brass dinner bells to large ships' bells. Furthermore, they are constructed of many different materials: steel, copper, glass, brass. One set even appears to be made of solid gold. In the corner opposite where you stand is a large, formidable-looking door that has no apparent hinges or handle. The center of this chamber is adorned with a short, carved stone table; upon the table sits a small but ornate gold casket.

The exit door on the north wall is magically locked and cannot be opened except under one condition: the door unlocks for a few seconds after the set of gold bells—there are five—ring. These bells ring once every five minutes or so, but not before the players have spent a few minutes role-playing and struggling with the problem. The five gold bells ring rather poorly, sounding more like dull thuds than clear peals. There are 35 sets of bells in the room. Each set is fused to a central bar which rotates to ring the bells. The bar is in turn rooted magically in its sockets in the wall. If the gold bells are removed from the wall, the door can still be opened when the bells would have rung, as the magic still is operative. When the gold bells ring, the door can be opened with a gentle push.

A useful clue to this puzzle is provided within the casket. The casket is built of sturdy wood, gilded with gold foil and locked. It can be unlocked, smashed, or otherwise broken. Inside, on a holly green velvet pillow, are five ornate golden rings. If, after 20 minutes, the solution still eludes the players, a visit from Larry may be useful.

Encounter 7—Fowl Trouble

As you proceed down the corridor, the din of a fight—metal biting into armor—can be heard. The corridor ends in a large circular chamber with a domed roof. A central firepit lights the chamber. Surrounding it is a circular pool of water, 20′ in diameter and of indeterminate depth. There is an exit directly across from where you now stand. The source of the noise you heard in the corridor is nowhere in sight—until you look down. At your feet are six geese in

plate mail and carrying shields. They are swinging at each other with fowl-looking swords and flails. A few seconds pass before they notice you, and the six geese meleeing stop. One is clearly the leader: a bit bigger and prouder than the others. He (or is it she?) removes its helm and speaks: "Halt! What do you desire here?"

The geese consider themselves honorable and chivalrous in every aspect. After learning the party's intentions, introductions are made. The geese are named Huey, Dewey, Louie, Phooey, Gooey, and Ralph (the leader). To be allowed to pass, the PCs must select one of their number to fight (not to the death) the six geese. When attacking, one goose will stand in front and use a weapon, while the other five will attack from the rear, employing their beaks ("the goose," see below). In a general melee, half of the geese use "long" swords (treat as daggers) and the others use "flails" (1–3/1–2 dmg). If the PC renders all but one of the geese unconscious or dead, the party will be allowed to pass unharmed. If the geese win, the PCs will be asked to chose another champion to earn their right to pass. If the PCs threaten to rush the geese *en masse*, the birds reluctantly announce that the fight must be to the death.

Geese (6): Int Animal; AL anything you want so long as you have food; AC 1 (plate mail); MV 6, Fl 21 (B); HD 1/2; hp 1 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon or 1; SA +8 attack bonus on rear attacks with beak ("the goose"); SZ S; ML 5; XP 15 each.

Regardless of how the PCs get past the geese, when they pass the moat around the firepit, four killer frogs jump out of the water and attack. The geese are absolutely terrified of the frogs and will not aid in the defense.

Killer Frogs (4): Int Non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6, Sw 12; HD 1+4; hp 17 each; THAC0 16; #AT 3; Dmg 1–2/1–2/2–5; SZ S; ML 6; XP 35 each.

The frogs have recently worked their way into the moat via an underground stream; the geese are just as surprised by this attack as are the PCs.

Encounter 8—Swami Lake

After that last, fowl run-in with the six geese meleeing (not to forget those nasty killer frogs) another encounter near the water is the last thing you want to deal with. How much more of this delay in retrieving TG has to be tolerated? As these thoughts run through your heads, your skin begins to crawl as the sound of splashing water and happy voices cut the air. At least the voices sound human this time. As you round a corner, you see a chamber containing wall-to-wall water, an E-shaped pier, and seven dark-skinned humans swimming, talking, laughing, and having a good time. They are wearing soggy turbans and little else. One swims to meet you at the pier. He says in a thick, rich accent: "How is it that you are doing, yes? We are the swimming swamis, and this is our pool of water, yes. What is it that we can be for you doing?"

The seven swamis swimming are not really doing much of anything, except swimming and discussing minor issues like the meaning of life. The swamis will do anything they can to help the party to cross the water. One simple solution is for the swamis to form a human chain, a swamibridge of sorts, across the water. However, the swamis will not make any useful suggestions of their own, unless the encounter takes unduly long.

The water is uniformly 20′ deep (and a very comfortable 84 degrees). The swamis will be philosophical and understanding about any difficulty a non-swimming PC might have about getting across.

The pier is made of 8-inch-wide wood planks on pontoons, so that it floats on the water. The walls of the chamber are slick with condensed moisture and generic slimes, and therefore unclimbable. A *spider climb* spell will allow the caster to cling to the wall, but because of the slick surface, no load can be carried. The party probably will have to rely on help from the swamis.

Swimming Swamis (7): Int High; AL optimistic; AC 10 (even I know better than to swim in armor); MV 12, Sw 6; HD 1; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT nil; Dmg nil; SA move silently when no one is there to hear it, sharp tongue; SD witty comeback, +4 saving throw bonus vs. spells causing confusion or other mental calamities; SZ Skinny; ML 9; XP 15 each.

Encounter 9—Chocolate Milkshades

OK, so what could be worse than water, you ask yourselves while rounding the next corner. How about handfuls of happy Holsteins in a nice, sunny green pasture? Sure you can handle that. How about the wooden buckets under most of them? How about the eight chocolate-brown, but shadowy folk who are just going about their own business milking the cows? How about the table just in front of the entrance, covered with an absolutely huge pile of decorated Winter Holiday cookies? Yummy!

Two rounds after the first PC steps into the pasture, the milkshades attack with the buckets. A hit with the milk (which is fresh and warm) causes any creature—including the shades—to fall into a deep sleep for 1d8 hours if a save vs. spell fails. An entire bucket must be thrown to be effective. Although no one in the party is proficient with milk buckets, the large area of effect (about 5′ diameter) and fairly long range (about 10′) cancels the normal nonproficiency penalties. A cookie dunked in milk has the same effect as a full bucket of milk, but the appropriate nonproficiency penalty must be applied. Dunked cookie range is about 20′; after that they fall apart from sogginess. While there are only 22 full milkbuckets (eight start in the hands of the shades), there are essentially an unlimited number of cookies.

When the battle has run its course, R. S. Claws enters and wakens the PCs if needed. Any shades which are still awake back off; they know better than to mess with Claws.

Milkshades (8): Int Low (otherwise they wouldn't be stuck here milking cows); AL homogenized; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 17 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg hit causes save vs. spell or fall asleep for 1d8 hours; SD hit only by milk or enchanted weapons; SZ M; ML 11; XP 175 each.

Holsteins (udderly too many): Int Animal; AL N; AC 9; MV 6; HD 4; hp 18 each; THAC0 (for a cow? who are we trying to kid?); #AT nil; Dmg nil; SZ L; ML 3; XP nil.

Encounter 10— Dependent Claws

> Wow! That last fight was weird! As you try to shake off the effects of the battle, your eyes suddenly lock onto those of a tall lizardman. The lizardman is grizzled with age. He looks a bit annoyed. He taps his left foot and scowls. After a few seconds of what must be introspection on the lizardman's part (and nervousness on yours), the scowl softens to an amused grin. He chuckles as he speaks, "Well, what can I do for you folks? Since you've struggled to come all this way and managed to pass through my punderful security system, I imagine your need to see me must be rather urgent. In fact, it must be downright critical that you speak to me, seeing as how you've taken time away from your families and friends at Winter Holiday time. Oh, by the way, let me apologize for not introducing myself earlier. I am Claws, R. S. Claws. The R. S. is a nickname referring to my razor-sharp claws (he displays said long, nasty claws). So, who are you and why have you traveled here?"

R. S. Claws must be convinced of the party's intentions to aid TG before he will allow them to meet with him. Claws' main concern is for his very close "cousin's" well-being. Furthermore, he is a bit of a scrooge when it comes to Winter Holiday.

Claws puts off answering any questions about TG's situation with GRINCH, saying that they should ask the Bearded One himself (when he is found), so that there will not be any confusion or misinterpretation of the situation. TG has told Claws everything that has been going on up North (see encounter 11 for details).

R.S. Claws: AL NG (reformed while marooned); STR 17, INT 15, WIS 12, CON 17, DEX 15, CHA 12; AC 4; MV 6, Sw 12; F 15; hp 116; THAC0 6; #AT 5 (4 claws, 1 bite) or 4 (2 weapons attacks, 1 claw, one bite); Dmg 1–2 +2 (claw), 1–6 (bite), or by weapon (+1 "to hit" +1 damage from strength); SA +1 "to hit" bonus on claw attacks; SZ M; ML 14; XP 5,000.

Weapons: long sword, long bow, dagger, mace

R. S. Claws appears exactly like the lizardman that he is, but grizzled with age. He was the only survivor of the lizardman pirate crew that was shipwrecked on what is now his home island. After several lonely years among the ruins, and plenty of exercise fighting off the local nasties (a few orcs, mostly), a human landed on the island. The human, who indicated he wished to get away from the rat race for awhile, was a high-level fighter who had contracted lycanthropy from a lucky (but now decidedly dead) wererat. During the many years on the island (Claws doesn't recall whether it was forty or four hundred), he learned from this strange human much about weaponry and fighting, and he practiced on the local critters. The hermit's lycanthropy was eventually cured by continued consumption of a variety of cranberry indigenous to the isle. So cured, the hermit returned to society, but Claws remained behind. The hermit was actually TG in an alternate life, but neither Claws nor TG is cognizant of this fact (it's been a long life). During the time on the island, there was no magic to use (TG did not know about his innate abilities). Accordingly, Claws still believes magic to be an unnecessary crutch in personal combat. Claws and TG met (again) on one of the latter's many Annual Trips (Claws asked for a coconut peeler), and they became fast friends. TG still visits whenever possible and actually views Claws as his "cousin." The necessarily self-sufficient style of Claws' life has left little time for Winter Holiday thoughts, so Claws is a bit of a scrooge. But sometimes he finds himself in deep philosophical discussions about the subject with TG. In addition, TG's love of a good pun has worn off on Claws; when these two get going the sanity of all within earshot is in danger. TG has provided the name "R. S.," that is, "razor-sharp."

Encounter 11— Here Comes The Giftmaster

> Claws leads you into a massive chamber: it must be about 40' square and 20' high. The entrance is through a door in one corner; the only obvious exit is a hallway in the opposite corner. The furniture in the chamber looks like it had been built by someone shipwrecked on a tropical island. It is constructed of bamboo, vine, and scraps of water-stained timbers. The prominent item of furniture is a huge—and clearly quite sturdy, judging from the load it bears—bamboo table laden with all sorts of Winter Holiday food and drink. Light is provided by several brass braziers in various spots around the room. Piled next to one of these is a set of red garments, trimmed with white fur, a wide black belt with an ornate silver buckle, and large black boots. The clothes are clearly tailored for one of large, no, make that rotund, build. Lying in a steaming, frothing tub of water next to the laundry pile must be the owner of the dandy duds: he is a large, satisfied-looking human, with bushy eyebrows, a full beard, and long snow white hair. This must be the legendary Giftmaster. His eyes open slowly, like that of a lazy cat sunbathing. He stands, dripping, clad only in red, fur-trimmed shorts. After grabbing a green- and red-striped towel, he towels himself off and he speaks. His voice is deep, but very reassuring. He radiates good humor and peace. "Ho! Ho! Ho!" he says, "And so who are our guests, R. S.?"

Before answering any questions, TG wants to hear the PCs' side of the story. Because of his eagerness, and a few good words from R. S., TG is easily convinced of the party's earnestness. However, TG needs to be convinced that the party is interested in preserving Winter Holiday. He will try (very hard, in fact) to make the characters see his side of the story.

TG knows or suspects the following:

* TG is not senile, just overworked and highly involved in preparations for the Annual Trip. He will admit, however, to being a bit scatterbrained at times.

* Background checks on Dragon and her associates came up completely blank. TG hired them anyway, since he is such a trusting fellow.

* Dragon and her associates have been more concerned with the details of the Annual Trip than with the overall Winter Holiday spirit. Sometimes

Dragon seems to be colder than the snow blowing outside.

* Since the arrival of Dragon, there has been increasing anxiety and decreasing productivity amongst the toymakers. This may be connected to the committees which Racoon established. The toymakers spend a lot of time in meetings and reading little red books, from which they occasionally quote long passages, instead of making toys.

* The average overhead cost per child (OCPC) has risen an unprecedented 5.4% since last Winter Holiday; this rise may be related to the committees.

* Overall, the situation at the North Pole Facility is tense at best.

If asked why he ran, TG explains that he took the Sleigh and Reindeer so they would not fall into Dragon's clutches during this critical time of year. However, TG will have to return soon to the North Pole Facility to insure the final details for the Annual Trip are secure. The most critical reason to return is so that this year's Naughty/Nice roster, currently believed to be in Dragon's hands, can be retrieved. This list is absolutely essential to insure proper and equitable gift distribution; it must be retrieved at all costs.

If the PCs suggest that they or one of the GRINCH members could make the Annual Trip in TG's place, TG points out that the reindeer work for him, only he knows how to operate the sleigh, and that it takes a pretty special being to locate every child—worldwide—who deserves a gift.

The bottom line: TG must convince the PCs to face down Dragon, one way or another.

When the party is ready to return, TG and R.S. lead the party to the bakery, stopping on the way to collect the party's magic. The party will be offered a reindeer ride back to the North Pole Facility. If the party previously antagonized the Reindeer, some apologies are in order here. R.S. will not accompany the group traveling north, expressing his faith that the party is more than adequate to perform this minor task without his insignificant aid.

The Giftmaster: AL CG; STR 16, INT 16, WIS 14, CON 15, DEX 17, CHA 19; AC −3; MV 9; Th 17; hp 71; THAC0 12; #AT 1; Dmg pummel; SZ M; ML 14; XP 6,000.

Thieving Abilities

PP	OL	FT	MS	HS	DN	CW	RL	BS
95	95	95	95	95	55	95	80	x5

Magic Items: Platinum key (for *sleigh of delivery*), extra-huge capacity *bag of holding* (holds 3,000 lbs, 450 cu. ft., and weighs 120 lbs when full), *fur cap of protection* (provides AC 0, +3 saving throw bonus, and proof against environmental extremes; it also looks swell with the red suit).

Spell-Like Abilities (usable at will, cast at 12th level): *haste self, know naughty or nice, detect lie, comprehend languages, feather fall, levitate, change self* (for those small chimneys), and *create paper, bows, and wrap.*

Most referees should have no difficulty portraying this character. TG appears as an old (but not as old as he actually is) and rotund human. He is always clad in red clothes with white fur trim. The belt is wide, black, and fixed with a huge and ornate silver buckle (estimated value over 1,000 gp). The boots are likewise black. TG's disposition is more than just a perpetual good mood; the man is downright jolly. He finds every little thing deeply enjoyable. He wants everyone in the world, and especially those around him, to share in this. He will automatically try to alter any foul moods of those near him. It takes a major bad event (such as GRINCH's interference with Winter Holiday) to upset TG or make him anxious. TG is also an avid punster, but this fact is not generally known.

TG is also a consummate thief, but never refers to himself as such. Anyone questioning TG's yearly habit of committing several million acts of breaking and entering in the guise of delivering presents will be ho-hoed off, but the name duly recorded on TG's Naughty/Nice Roster.

Finally, TG's entire existence is for Winter Holiday. He is actually rather uninformed (but in no way naive) about the goings-on in the world for the rest of the year. Everyone at the North Pole Facility (except GRINCH) absolutely adores him, as indicated by the above-average Charisma of 19.

Encounter 11—Intermission

Sometime during the return flight, Larry (by TG's whiskers, not again!) has gotten onto the present transportation apparatus (PTA) at the North Pole Facility, and has been teleported to the rumble seat of the sleigh.

Larry will cause the party grief, in the typical leprechaun style, for 10–15 minutes of playing time. Afterward, Larry simply remains with the party, *invisible* and out of the way, until he chooses sides in the final struggle (encounter 13). Larry is too afraid of Dragon to get involved any earlier, but he is neutral and wants to see the good/evil (or PC/GRINCH) power scale stay balanced.

Encounter 12—Evening the Score, Peon

> The party, reindeer, sleigh, and TG come to a perfect two-runner and forty-hoof landing outside the Administration Building. "I'm not sure what Dragon and her associates are planning," says TG with an uncharacteristically grim look. "But I'm sure that they're in their council chamber, and waiting for you. I'm no good in a fight, and I've just got to check on final preparations for tonight's Annual Trip. Take-off is in about four hours!" TG's face softens a bit. "Any last way that I can help?"

The party has landed in the snow just outside the entrance to the Administration Building (map 1). TG can provide information (that he knows), but no material help outside of what his spells provide. When the party is ready:

> "Well, then good luck to you all. I will wait here for you, but no more than 30 minutes, for then I must be off."

When the party opens the doors to the sitting room (room A on map 1), Administrative Building:

> This room has not changed much in the two days or so that you've been gone. However, the huge table laden with all that great food, eggnog, cookies, and candy canes, has been replaced by a different fare: seafood. That is to say, it has been replaced by a bunch of giant, although yet immature, scorpions. It's clear that you will have to be careful to get past here, because these nine babies can sting.

This encounter is nice and simple. The scorpions attack as soon as the door is opened, with normal chances for surprise. They will travel outside the room if the party allows them. If the party leads the scorpions out into the snow, they will follow. The scorpions will perish in the arctic cold outside, although they stay energetic long enough to do the party some real damage. The PCs likely will be forced to kill them before the cold does. TG and the reindeer immediately beat a hasty retreat if the scorpions are led outside. The party should be bright enough to figure out that the scorpion fight will certainly alert anyone in the vicinity (including GRINCH in the council chamber next door). Spending time leading the scorpions outside will be pointless unless done quietly.

Baby Giant Scorpions (9): Int Non; AL N; AC 3; MV 15; HD 5+5; hp 17 each; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/1-2; SA Poison from tail sting causes 1d4 additional points of damage if the victim fails a save vs. poison; SZ S; ML 9; XP 175 each.

Encounter 13—Apocalypse Winter Holiday Eve

If the party charges into the council chamber, there is nothing to read to the players. However, if they enter slowly and cautiously, read the following:

> Ok, so this is it. Behind that door is the final solution. While you are considering whatever fate that awaits beyond the door for you and your friends, strains of music are heard drifting into the room—not a whole symphony or any voices, just a flute and drums. Shortly, the drumming ceases, but the flute continues to pour out its melodic strains.

The flute is playing some song appropriate to the construction of snowmen, such as "Frosty."

The final encounter in *Winter Holiday* has three potential solutions:

A. Fight and destroy GRINCH.

B. Negotiate a trade, perhaps to include TG, the Sleigh and Reindeer, the Naughty/Nice Roster, and a way home.

C. Join GRINCH.

There could be more solutions, depending upon the players. Furthermore, individual PCs may seek solutions different than the party as a whole.

Dragon is aware of all these possibilities. Her main concern is the disruption of Winter Holiday, not the destruction of the PCs, who are potential converts to her cause. Therefore, her initial response to the return of the party will be to establish a passive defense and await the party's actions. She will respond in kind, fighting to the death (not hers, she hopes) if attacked. She may negotiate if the party is in a talkative mood. Any solution is okay with Dragon as long as GRINCH's mission is not permanently jeopardized.

In a fight, Larry joins the weakest group, most likely the party. If the groups negotiate, Larry hangs around (*invisible*) in case a fight breaks out. He will not initiate a fight himself, but may provide illusionary help during negotiations if he believes one side is gaining an unfair advantage.

Unless the party manages to defeat the scorpions quietly, GRINCH will be alerted (by the noise) that the party has returned, and thus begin at step 1 of the battle strategy outlined below (prepared by Dragon, and detailed for the judge's convenience). If the party catches GRINCH by surprise, and fights instead of negotiates, begin at step 5.

1. Dragon plays the *drums of picnic;* Racoon and Bull eat if needed.
2. Dragon casts *clairvoyance* to watch the scorpion fight and get some inkling of the party's powers and abilities. Bull plays *pipes of the snowmen,* but does not start to create a snowman until the party attacks.
3. Dragon casts *protection from normal missiles* on herself.
4. Dragon casts *improved mirror image* when she judges the time to be best.
5. If the party is hostile toward GRINCH (as determined by *clairvoyance*), Dragon begins to play the *drums* again just as the PCs prepare to enter the Council Chamber; Bull begins creation of a snowman from the *pipes.* The snowman appears in front of the door after the *mirror image* is cast.

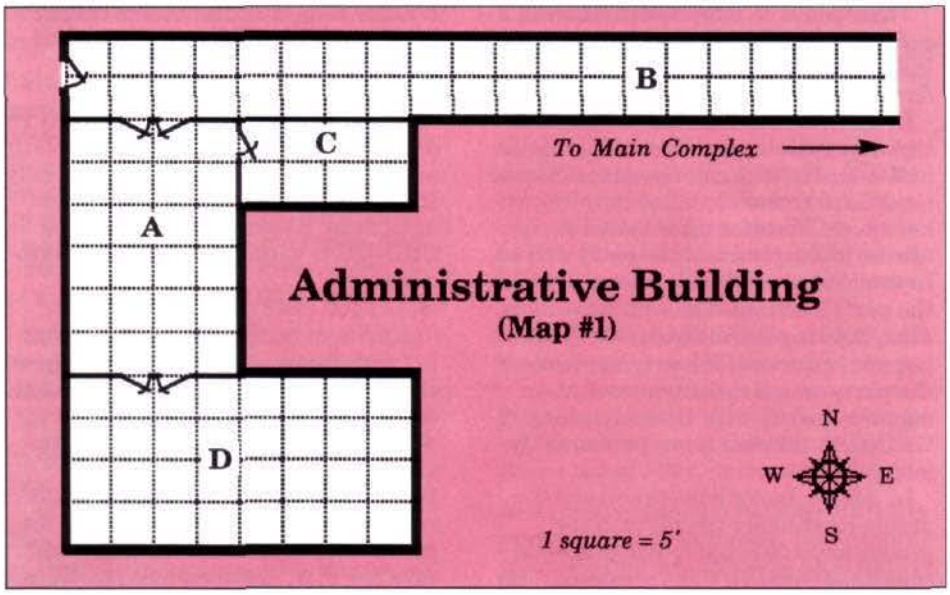
If the party wants to negotiate, Dragon will drop the *improved mirror image* as a sign of good faith. Talk then begins. If a fight breaks out, begin the attack with the same plan as above.
6. As the party enters, the snowman forms and the PCs (and Larry) must roll saving throws versus the *drum* effects. If Larry fails (don't forget his magic resistance), he will have to steal food from the closest PC and will consequently be visible.
7. Dragon casts *polymorph self* (tiny red dragon form); Bull and Racoon move to attack, concentrating on the previously-identified spellcasters. Bull will fight until dead. Racoon will fight as long as GRINCH is winning; she will surrender otherwise.
8. Dragon casts *web;* Larry joins in (*invisible,* of course), using pickpocketing and illusion abilities to create general confusion such as stealing random spell components or items.
9. Dragon casts *hold person* on a convenient PC or PCs.
10. Dragon uses her remaining spells as needed, without regard for Bull or Racoon if they are nearly dead. She will save her most destructive spells for last, hoping to capture any party members who surrender or who are knocked out.
11. Dragon's escape. If things are going badly, Dragon casts *darkness 15' radius* to cover her exit via *teleport* spell.

Dragon: AL LE; STR 7, INT 17, WIS 14, CON 12, DEX 16, CHA 12; AC 3; MV 12; Wz 11; hp 39; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon or spell; SZ M; ML 14; XP 6,000.

Weapons: dagger, 6 darts
Magic Items: *Ring of shocking grasp, Bracers of defense AC 5, ring of protection +1, pipes of the snowmen* (see below)

Spells Carried: *burning hands, magic missile* (x3), *darkness 15' radius, web, Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter, ray of enfeeblement, clairvoyance, hold person, protection from normal missiles, lightning bolt, improved mirror image* (new spell), *ice storm, polymorph self, cone of cold, teleport, wall of force*

Dragon appears as a lanky, middle-aged elf. She is comely, save for her somewhat elongated but blunt nose. She is rarely seen out of her shimmering, deep red robes. Dragon controls GRINCH, and consequently does most of the talking. Abandoned by her parents when she was young, she has developed a dislike of family events, especially Winter Holiday, and has a rather cynical outlook on life. The other two members of GRINCH, in Dragon's eyes, are disposable if it will help her cause. In battle, she likes to *polymorph* herself into small, bird-sized creatures, often employing the form of a tiny red dragon, hence her name. It is not



Dragon's intention to be killed in this operation. She merely wants to weaken Winter Holiday. Accordingly, if the battle is going against her, she will attempt to *teleport* out.

Pipes of the Snowmen: Playing an appropriate tune on these platinum pipes causes a furious, blinding snowstorm, 20' in diameter, to issue forth for as long as the pipes are winded. Visibility in this blizzard is 10 feet. After one round of piping, the snow, as designated by the piper, forms into a vaguely humanoid shape. This requires one full round. When formed, the snowman attacks the nearest warm-blooded creature. The attack cannot be controlled by the piper and continues until all potential targets (or the snowman) are destroyed. If attacked while forming, the snowman simply fails to coalesce that round.

Snowmen from these pipes have the following statistics:

Int Non; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 6+6; hp 33; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 2–8; SA a successful save vs. paralyzation or resistance to cold reduces the damage the snowman inflicts by one half, creatures immune to cold attacks take no damage); SD double damage from fire-based attacks, any fire attacks on the snowman while it is coalescing will destroy it), immune to cold-based attacks; immune to normal cold, invisible in snow and ice; SZ M; ML N/A.

Pipes of the snowmen can be made to yield only one snowman per week.

Improved Mirror Image *illusion/phantasm)*

Level: 4
Range: 0
Components: V,S
Duration: one round/level
Casting Time: 4
Area of Effect: 10' radius
Saving Throw: none

This spell is in most respects like a *mirror image* spell, except as noted above. Furthermore, 1d6+6 images of each subject within the area of effect are created. These images wink out at a rate of one per round at the end of the spell duration, or when struck by a melee or missile attack. Special note: for this scenario, the spell will create 9 images of Racoon (for 10 lords-a-leaping), 10 of Bull (11 pipers piping) and 11 of Dragon (12 drummers drumming).

Racoon: AL LN; STR 15, INT 12, WIS 10, CON 15, DEX 16, CHA 14; AC 2; MV 12; Th 13; hp 54; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SZ M; ML 10; XP 3,000.

Weapons: broad sword, flail, garrote, long bow

Magic Items: *Bracers of defense AC 6, broad sword +1, 20 arrows +1, boots of float like a butterfly* (see below)

Thieving Abilities

PP	OL	FT	MS	HS	DN	CW	RL	BS
95	82	80	95	85	40	95	65	x5

Racoon derives her name from the mask-like birthmark on her face. In all other aspects, she is unremarkable. She is middle-aged, and of average height and weight. She joined GRINCH under the pretext of neutralizing Winter Holiday. But she is actually a thieves' guild plant to keep an eye on the ambitious Dragon. Before this job, she had never heard of Winter Holiday, but is intrigued by the concept (access to all those houses!).

Boots of Float Like a Butterfly: These boots allow the wearer to engage in fancy footwork, so as to appear to be dancing. This adds −2 to AC. Alternately, the wearer may do a flip over the head of a small or medium-sized opponent while engaged in melee. This function adds −4 to AC and is performed in lieu of any attack for that round.

Bull: AL LE; STR 18/04, INT 6, WIS 14, CON 17, DEX 15, CHA 9; AC 0; MV 12; F 12; hp 95; THAC0 10; #AT 3/2 Dmg by weapon (+1 "to hit" +3 damage from strength); SZ M; ML 14; XP 3,000.

Magic Items: *Bastard sword +1, shield +1, chain mail +3, drums of picnic* (see below)

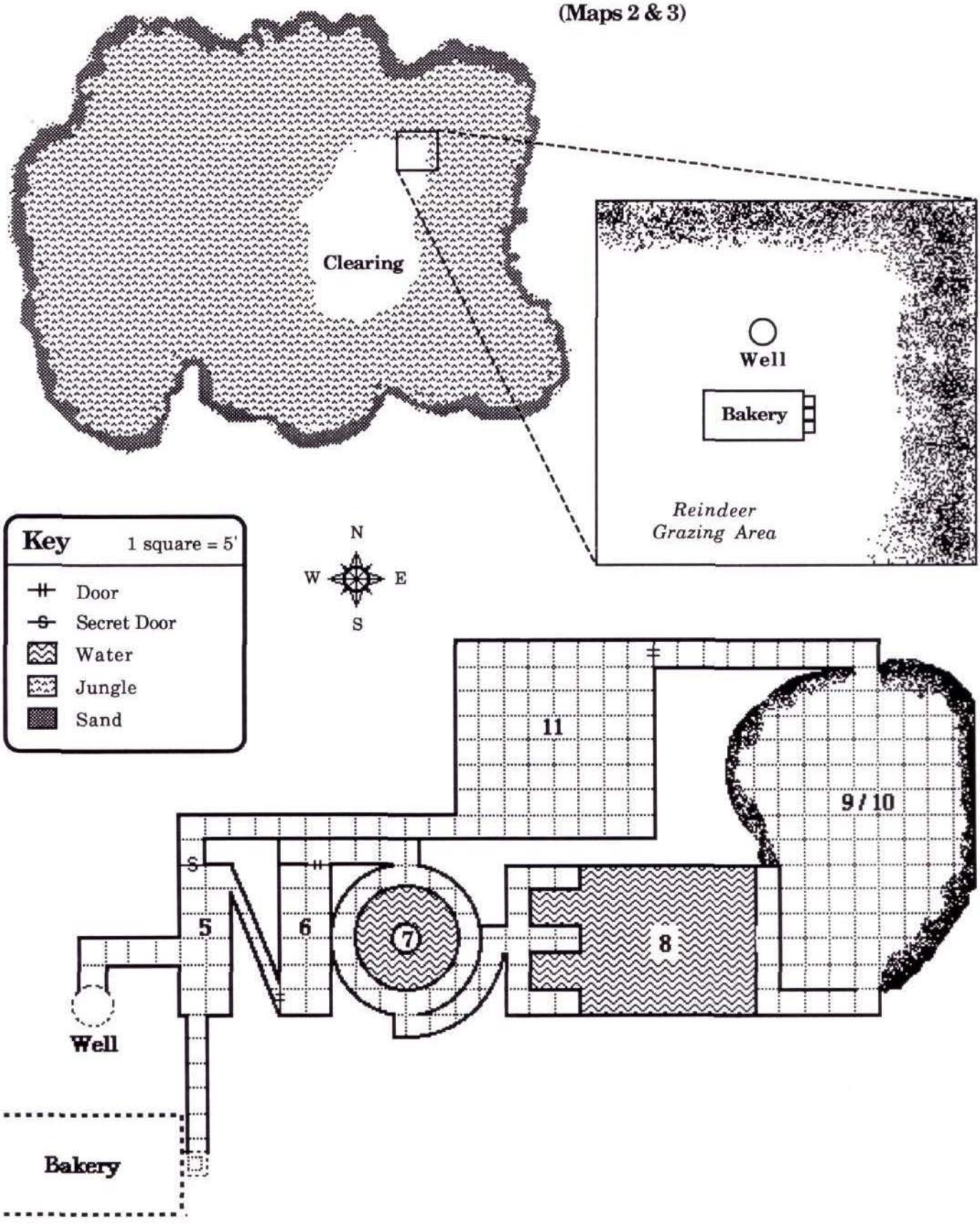
Bull is the stereotypical big, stupid fighter, about 40 years old. He is smitten by Dragon and will do almost anything for her. He really doesn't understand about Winter Holiday, but if Dragon says it is bad, then it must be a really awful thing.

Drums of Picnic: When these drums are played, all creatures (except the drummer) must roll a save vs. spells. Failure indicates the victim immediately sits down to eat a picnic for 2–5 rounds. Halflings save at −4. Only one saving throw is needed per turn.

When the encounter is over, the party will find two scrolls in a desk drawer. One is the Naughty/Nice roster (non-magical), and the second is a scroll (usable by any class) which when read will transport the party home. When TG has secured the Naughty/Nice roster, he will leap into the sleigh and take flight. As he fades from sight he is heard to exclaim, "A merry Winter Holiday to all, and to all a good night!" ❑

R. S. Claws' Island

(Maps 2 & 3)



Bookwyrms

Building Troy Denning's Dragonwall

by Jim Lowder

The Empires Trilogy was born early in 1989, during a discussion of a planned one-shot oriental FORGOTTEN REALMS™ novel. David Cook had been slated to write what had been tentatively titled *Path of Stones*, but for various reasons, that book was shelved (though the characters planned for the novel did make it into the game supplement, *Hall of Heroes*). Still, since the regular readers of the Realms novels had made it pretty clear that they were interested in stories involving Kara-Tur, TSR wanted to set at least one book there in 1990. If it wasn't going to be a stand-alone novel, it would have to be part of a trilogy.

We had a setting for the then untitled trilogy—or at least part of it—but no direction for the story. (If you were wondering, the book department sometimes assigns a general direction to the FORGOTTEN REALMS and DRAGONLANCE® trilogies before we find authors who can plot the books in detail.) Perhaps, someone suggested, there should be a war between the western and the eastern Realms.

The people at that meeting had been, up until that point, staring at a map of Kara-Tur plastered on one wall of the room. Now they turned to the map of the western Realms posted nearby. Mary Kirchoff, managing editor of TSR's book department, looked from one map to the other and said, "Hey! The maps don't hook up! What's in between them?"

After a few more meetings, the Hordelands—at least in concept—became part of the Forgotten Realms and the overall plot for the Empires Trilogy was set.

From there, David Cook went to work on the first book in the Empires Trilogy, *Horselords*, in which a barbarian leader unites the savage tribes that populate those same Hordelands. By the end of that novel, they were to attack Shou Lung. At the same time, David was busy creating *The Horde* boxed set for the Forgotten Realms gaming crowd.

The elusive oriental Realms novel that had instigated the initial Empires meetings suddenly became the second book of the trilogy, *Dragonwall*. Fresh from his work on *Waterdeep*, the final entry in the Avatar Trilogy, Troy Denning signed on to tackle the daunting task of bringing Shou Lung to literary life (as well as create a trio of modules for the upcoming Horde boxed set).

Dragonwall recounts the tale of a Shou general who must rally the emperor's armies against the barbarians who have invaded his country. And while the first book in the series was told from the perspective of the barbarians, *Dragonwall* details the war from the Shou point of view.

Understanding the Shou perspective necessary for the story was not an easy thing. According to Troy Denning, "The biggest challenge of the whole project was trying to place myself in the shoes of a Shou general. Shou culture is not like ours. It's remarkably civilized and has been civilized since the dawn of human history. But at the same time, it's brutal beyond belief. Coming to accept the idea that a people can be highly civilized, highly cultured, but at the same time terribly, terribly vicious is very difficult."

Troy also had to overcome the fact that much of the material written for TSR's oriental fantasy setting (in the *Oriental Adventures* hardcover and the *Kara-Tur* boxed set) has focused on the Japanese facets of the culture. Shou Lung, as depicted in *Dragonwall* is more like ancient China—a place of huge cities under the control of a massive, highly structured bureaucracy. From its initial conception, the Empires Trilogy was intended to show readers what it was like to live in the three sections of the Realms where the story occurs.

Research played a large part in helping Troy understand the Shou culture, which he based in part upon the Sung Dynasty in China. But research can only go so far in helping an author write an interesting, believable character. Imagination and creativity are also vital.

When asked how he prepared to write Batu Min Ho, the Shou general who is the hero of *Dragonwall*, Troy laughed, then noted, "I pretended like I was playing *Diplomacy* or, better yet, *Nuclear War*. I tried always to consider what would be the most efficient means for Batu to accomplish any goal he was pursuing. I considered him a very tunnel-visioned sort of character. After he set a goal, he could only be distracted from it by the most dire of circumstances. Batu has a total disregard for his own life—or anyone elses—but at the same time, he is a very competent character who has no real malice."

Epic, earth-shattering wars, like the one that serves as the overall plot for Empires, are not uncommon in fantasy. Certainly 1989's Avatar Trilogy, which chronicled the apocalyptic fall of the gods themselves, showed that big events can shake the Realms from time to time. But Troy, who worked under the psuedonym Richard Awlinson on the third novel of that trilogy, *Waterdeep*, is quick to point out the differences between the Empires Trilogy and the Avatar Trilogy.

"The biggest difference has to be that the characters in the Empires books make the action of the novels, while in *Waterdeep* and in many fantasy novels, the heroes are caught up in the action, then go along with it and deal with it the best they can. In those novels, the heroes might be able to do some small thing that changes the course of history. In Empires, we deal with the people who make history on a daily basis.

"It's quite a challenge to write that type of character. In gaming terms, they're 20th level paladins, but they're constantly forced to remember to keep their armies fed when they really want to go out and fight dragons." ❑

The New Rogues Gallery

It Was An Ugly Building Anyway

by Laura D. Craig

Dante Greyshadow stared across the muddy river at the new edifice being erected on the site of the burned-down Paladin's Resthouse. A small lift of his lips was the only outward show of expression Dante allowed himself as he remembered how the old tavern, a favorite haunt of Knights of Kalador, had burst into sudden and glorious pyrotechnics which he himself had engineered. But he hadn't done it alone, he thought, recalling the deed . . . Rezhyk and Clint had been there.

"Wait a moment, Dante," Rezhyk scowled. "Let me get this straight—you want to WHAT . . . ?"

"Blow up the Paladin's Resthouse," Dante said simply.

"Why?"

"Why not?" Dante countered. "You said yourself there's way too many Knights of Kalador around these days. You told me you were afraid . . ."

"I'm AFRAID of nothing." Rezhyk sneered. "I said I was CONCERNED, there's a difference."

"Alright, then. You're concerned they may discover your keep way out here, find out what you're up to, and stop your plans." Dante knew Rezhyk intended to find a way to resurrect the evil mage Ramallion. While he didn't exactly like the idea (Ramallion could never be trusted—dead or alive) he wasn't going to hinder Rezhyk's research. It made Rezhyk a more powerful ally.

Rezhyk considered Dante's argument. "What do you want from me?"

Clint, who had just joined the duo, chuckled softly to himself. He had to admit Dante's plan was audacious, and he halfway considered donating his part in the scheme so he could strike at the paladin Gedsak the Gallant, a personal nemesis. Business was business, though, and he couldn't let Dante think he could touch him for charity work anytime he wanted.

I'm in," Clint said. "I'll do what you want, but there's a small matter of material costs, labor. . . ."

"Don't try to con me, Clint," Dante said severely. "I've known you too long. You'll be paid the standard fee for a job like this."

"So what do you get out of it?" Clint asked idly.

"The satisfaction of seeing my brother's name dragged into the mire," Dante smiled openly this time. It was an old sore with him. His twin brother Damien had joined the Knights of Kalador. That wouldn't have been so bad if he had just let Dante alone, but Damien saw it his duty to make Dante repent of his evil ways. Dante, however, didn't want to change his ways, and decided upon a unique and ingenious form of retaliation—he masqueraded as his twin when the opportunity presented itself and often completed "jobs" under Damien's name.

"Gods-cursed thumper!" Dante called his brother privately. The term referred to the priests of the Order of Light, of which Kalador was the patron, who frequently "thumped" their holy books in an effort to emphasize a point during sermons.

"I'll have what you need by this time tomorrow," Clint said. "Where should I bring it?"

"Rezhyk's keep," Dante responded. "I have a few things to set up for this job, and Rezhyk has to do a bit of his magic stuff before we're ready."

"Fine with me," Clint said. "Just let me know when you're going to do it so I can get a good seat."

"Now tell me again exactly what you intend to do with all this debris," Rezhyk said.

"Something the matter with your hearing, Rezhyk?" Clint smirked. "It seems pretty clear to me."

"Indulge me," Rezhyk said drily. "I heard it, I just don't believe it."

"Very well," Dante allowed a private smile. The two men with him were as close to friends as he would admit. "Clint has acquired a small amount of that black powder which will explode if ignited. I have a bung from a wine keg which I want to rig up so the whole thing will detonate when the bung is tapped. What I need from you, Rezhyk, is a small magical charge which will go off at that point and blow up the keg which will be packed, not with wine, but with oil. That should be sufficiently devastating to take out the entire building."

"Since when did you start advocating urban demolition?" Rezhyk jibed.

"Since my dear brother began frequenting the place," Dante returned. "Can you do it? If it isn't beneath your dignity, I mean . . ."

"My dignity, as you call it, has nothing to do with it. I just like to have a good reason for what I do."

"One thing bothers me, Dante," Clint said. "How are you going to pack the place with those Knights of Kalador?"

"Have no worries on that score," Dante smirked at this. "My dear brother has decided to help us, albeit unknowingly, of course."

Time passed and the plan was set into motion. Evert the innkeeper looked at the wine consignment suspiciously. "I still insist I didn't order this keg of wine," he scowled.

The vintner just shrugged. "I have the papers here: one keg of red wine to be delivered to the Paladin's Resthouse by midday. Signed by Damien Greyshadow, Knight of Kalador."

Evert's face cleared. "Ahhh! So Damien ordered it? Well, that's different, then. Did he say why he needed so much brought here? My own cellar is quite well-stocked."

"I just deliver the stuff. I don't ask questions," the vintner replied. "But I do know that you're to wait for his arrival this evening before tapping it."

Evert shrugged as he led the vintner to the cellar doors at the back of the inn. Who knew why the Knights did anything the way they did. All he knew or cared about was that they paid their tabs promptly and they seldom if ever trashed his tavern with brawls. If Damien wanted a keg of wine brought here, who was he, Evert, to argue about it?

Gedsak the Gallant rode up to the Paladin's Resthouse and led his charger around the back to the stables. The message from Damien Greyshadow seemed rather odd. No one had ever called for a meeting of the Knights of Kalador, and certainly never to meet at a Resthouse. Why not the Guildhouse? Still, he was young, what did he know about the Order except what he had learned in his two short years as a Knight? Perhaps this was something he didn't know about yet.

He made sure his horse was attended to, then made his way to the inn. Already quite a number of Knights were seated at the tables; the main topic of conversation seemed to be why they had been summoned. Apparently Damien had not yet arrived.

Gedsak took a seat near one wall. He didn't feel fully accepted by the older Knights as yet, and had decided not to join their groups unless invited. As he waited for his tankard to be filled with ale, he thought about asking for help on a serious matter. Apparently someone was committing crimes in his name. The description of the criminal even matched his own description to some degree. He knew he needed help on this. He refused to allow his good name to be besmirched by some hoodlum out on a lark.

"Sir Gedsak, Knight of Kalador?" a young voice asked.

"I am he," Gedsak replied. A small boy, about nine or 10 years of age, stood by his table.

"I knew it!" the boy said excitedly. "I saw ye ride in. I begged Micah, the bouncer, t' let me in t' see ye. I know who's doin' those nasty things an' blamin' 'em on ye!"

Gedsak came instantly alert. "You know who the foul blackguard is?"

"Aye. 'E lives not far from 'ere. I saw 'im beatin' a priest, sayin' all the while 'e was Gedsak the Gallant. I knew it wasn't you, though. I seen ye once helping a poor family what didn't have ought t' eat."

Gedsak grew more excited at the thought of closing in on his nemesis. If he could bring the scoundrel to justice, he could clear his name. "Can you lead me to him, now?" If he could catch the rogue quickly, he could be back before the appointed meeting with the other Knights, and could prove he hadn't committed the crimes of which he was accused.

"Aye, 'e be home now, an' if we hurry, ye can catch 'im afore 'e knows 'e's been caught!"

As they hurried toward the door, one of the older Knights rose to make an announcement.

"I have received word that Sir Damien has been unaccountably delayed. He insists he will be here as soon as possible, and asks that we partake of the keg of wine he had delivered here earlier today while we await his arrival. He also asks that we please do wait for him, as his information is vital to the survival of our Order."

There were murmurs at this speech, those of approval at the thought of the wine, and a wonder over the contents of Damien's message. But Gedsak felt a small hand tug on his and allowed himself to be led from the building. If Sir Damien were delayed, he had a little more time in which to trap the rat using his name.

The boy ran ahead of him calling, "This way, Sir Gedsak! We must hurry! It's not far at all!"

Gedsak marvelled at the boy's exuberance, and hurried to catch up with him. At the street corner he pulled up and glanced around; the boy had disappeared into the crowd.

"Kalador's Light!" he muttered, "where did he go?" He drew a deep breath to call out, and stopped, realizing he didn't know the boy's name.

Suddenly behind him the sky lit up in a tremendous fireball, and the percussion of the explosion sent him to his knees. Bits of burning wood began to fall around him and he staggered to his feet, turning to see the entire Paladin's Resthouse a torched inferno.

"Gods, NO!" he choked, and moved forward to help. Help who? the thought flit through his brain. No one could have lived through that explosion. And suddenly Gedsak knew he had been used. HE would be blamed for this latest atrocity. He turned and ran back down the street. Already a crowd was gathering and soon fingers would be pointed. Gedsak ran to save his life and avoid a lynching.

Around the corner a small boy melted into a small hideous creature. It hissed a low chuckle. "Master Rezhyk will be pleased," it murmured, "as will his friends."

"So you really didn't get your brother, Dante," Rezhyk remarked. "The blame is being put on some other hapless 'thumper.'"

"Oh, that's just as well," Clint interrupted softly. "I've been disguising myself as Gedsak and committing crimes on his behalf."

"Is that why you wanted my creature to pull him out of there?" Rezhyk asked.

"Yeah, I'm not ready to let up on him yet. Are you upset about that, Dante?"

"Not really. I don't care if Damien gets the blame. It's enough that he will know I had something to do with this episode, and he won't be able to prove it. Besides, there's another bonus from this job."

"What's that?" asked Clint.

"They'll have to spend some of their money to rebuild the place. It needed to be blown up. It was an ugly building, anyway."

Clint Of The East Wood

9th Level Drow Male Thief (Assassin)

STR: 14
INT: 12
WIS: 12
DEX: 18
CON: 13
CHR: 18
AC Normal: 5
AC Rear: 9
Hit Points: 38
Alignment: Lawful Evil
Languages: Common, Elvish

Weapon Proficiencies: Long bow, hand crossbow, long sword, dagger
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Disguise (17), trailing (18), reading lips (11), tightrope walking (18)
Magic Items: *Dagger +2, ring of invisibility, ring of protection +1, rope of climbing*

Thief Abilities

PP	OL	FT	MS	HS	DN	CW	RL
60	65	60	80	90	65	95	35

Drow Abilities: Clint can cast the following spells once a day—*dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment,* and *detect magic.* Clint has a 68% magic resistance.

Appearance: Clint is 255 years old, and is of medium height and build, with dark brown hair and eyes. He wears a scruffy beard and moustache most of the time, except in cases where shaving it would disguise his appearance. Clint is very good-looking, and uses his looks to his advantage wherever he can.

Background: Clint was born the illegitimate child of Lionel, Earl of the East Woods. He had an older half-brother and half-sister who met an untimely and highly suspicious fate, but Clint's alibis are sound. Clint very often appears slow on the uptake, and has a casual, laid-back attitude. He is very sharp when it comes to money and an easy take. Although he claims to be a loner, he is most often found in the company of Dante and Rezhyk.

Dante Greyshadow

14th Level Human Male Fighter (Assassin)

STR: 15
INT: 15
WIS: 13
DEX: 14
CON: 13
CHR: 15
AC Normal: 1
AC Rear: 1
Hit Points: 98
Alignment: Lawful Evil
Languages: Common, Elvish, Dwarvish

Weapon Proficiencies: Long sword, short sword, broad sword, long bow, lance, staff, spear, dagger
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Animal handling (horse) (12), blind-fighting, etiquette (15), disguise (15), trailing (14), riding (land-based) (16)
Magic Items: *Bracers of defense AC 1, long sword +5 named Inferno.* Dante acquired Inferno in his travels, and though the sword has caused him no end of trouble, he refuses to get rid of it. Inferno has an INT of 17 and EGO of 25. Dante is able to control Inferno's chaotic tendencies only 48% of the time; things get very interesting for his friends and companions when Inferno takes over. Inferno *Reads Magic and Languages* on command, and can *Detect Metals, Gems and Invisible Objects* three times a day. Its *special purpose* is to slay evil extra-planar creatures.

Appearance: Dante is 36 years old, stands 6' 2" tall and weighs about 190 lbs. — most of it muscle. His coal black hair and deep blue eyes add to his handsome appearance. Dante is polite, charming, and familiar with many social graces. However, he rarely shows these well-developed traits to his identical twin brother, Damien, who became a Paladin, and thus a thorn in Dante's side.

Background: Dante refuses to disclose where he is from. He prefers to think of himself as a citizen of the world. In keeping with his alignment, Dante will take a "job" only if it pays well and suits his purpose. He always has a plan for his actions, and never starts anything until all the details are worked out. He is cold, calculating, cunning, and very, very charming. He rides a heavy black warhorse named Nightshade who tolerates only Dante's presence.

Rezhyk The Wizard-Priest

Human Male Wizard/Priest Level 12/12

STR: 16
INT: 18
WIS: 19
DEX: 17
CON: 13
CHR: 17
AC Normal: 4
AC Rear: 7
Hit Points: 39
Alignment: Lawful Evil
Languages: Common, Elvish, Khashta'anian

Weapon Proficiencies: Staff, dagger, whip, sling, warhammer, mace, weighted net, club
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Ancient history (17), healing (17), herbalism (16), reading/writing (19), ancient languages (18), heraldry (18), astrology (18), spellcraft (16), weather sense (18), swimming (16), leatherworking (18), cooking (18)
Magic Items: *Ring of Spell Storing (fireball, lightning bolt, cone of cold), ring of protection +3, robe of blending, crystal ball (with clairaudience)*
Mage Spells/Day: 4 4 4 4 4 1
Priest Spells/Day: 6 5 5 3 2 2
Priest Abilities: As a priest of Set, Rezhyk has access to the Spheres of all, astral, combat, guardian, healing, necromantic, protection, and summoning. Further, Rezhyk can backstab as a thief of 12th level and is immune to all poisons.

Wizard Spell Books

Level 1 Spells:

Charm Person	*Detect Magic*
Magic Missile	*Sleep*
Spider Climb	*Spook*
Taunt	*Unseen Servant*

Level 2 Spells:

Blindness	*Continual Light*
Levitate	*Stinking Cloud*
Strength	*Summon Swarm*
Web	*Wizard Lock*

Level 3 Spells:

Blink	*Fireball*
Gust of Wind	*Lightning Bolt*
Non-Detection	*Suggestion*
Tongues	*Wraithform*

Level 4 Spells:

Dimension Door	*Illusionary Wall*
Polymorph Other	*Remove Curse*
Solid Fog	*Wizard Eye*

Level 5 Spells:

Animate Dead	*Cone Of Cold*
Conjure Elemental	*Feeblemind*
Passwall	*Teleport*

Level 6 Spells:

Enchant An Item	*Geas*
Guards and Wards	*Invisible Stalker*

Priest spells usually carried

Level 1 Spells:

Bless	*Curse*
Cure Light Wounds	*Cause Light Wounds*
Invisibility to Undead	*Magical Stone*

Level 2 Spells:

Chant	*Resist Fire*
Silence 15' Radius	*Slow Poison*
Spiritual Hammer	

Level 3 Spells:

Cure Disease	*Dispel Magic*
Prayer	*Animate Dead*
Feign Death	

Level 4 Spells:

Cure Serious Wounds	*Cause Serious Wounds*
Neutralize Poison	

Level 5 Spells:

Flame Strike	*Plane Shift*

Level 6 Spells:

Heal	*Blade Barrier*

Continued on page 30

Small Cons And Us

There Are Events Besides the Game Fair

by Linda M. Bingle and Donald J. Bingle

GEN CON® Game Fair 90 is behind us, and everyone is talking about the big convention. The games, fun, people, tournaments, and four solid days of gaming and griping and buying new products all combine to make that convention the highlight of the gaming year.

But you don't need to wait for that once-a-year opportunity to play great new games and tournaments with other like-minded fanatics; there are many, many opportunities throughout the year to game until you drop at smaller conventions. Most regions have at least one smaller convention each year or season—some lucky regions have several to choose from. The two of us have attended about 35 small conventions, primarily in the past five years. We have had a lot of fun and met some great new friends that we might have been too busy to get to know at the Big Con. And, based on our experience, we would like to offer some suggestions to organizers of smaller events.

Location

Most small conventions are not fortunate or well-funded enough to be held in giant convention halls like MECCA. Instead, they are often held in ballrooms or meeting rooms of local hotels—which usually have mundane guests and other functions going on simultaneously. Thus, small cons should aim for peaceful coexistence between the wild-eyed gamer and the easily-startled mundane.

We have also attended small cons held at schools, park district facilities, armories, golf club lunch rooms, and even the lounge area of a nursing home.

There are some important things to consider if you are planning a small convention. Make sure your location is easy for out-of-towners to find. If it is not, make sure you include a map or precise directions in your advance material. You should have plenty of space to run all the scheduled games. Allow some DMs to run their sessions in their hotel rooms to alleviate crowd and noise problems. Gamers should have access to quick, inexpensive food, whether at a reasonable hotel restaurant or at nearby fast food joints. It is preferable if at least one food establishment be open early and late—before and after tournaments are scheduled to run.

A convention that furnishes a list of nearby eateries, with directions if necessary, will help keep gamers contented and well-fed.

The last important consideration is that the convention not conflict with other major activities also being held in the facility. We have played tournament rounds in semi-darkness, punctuated by the throbbing lights of mirrored strobes, and with disco music blaring scant feet away. And we've played scenarios with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra playing full tilt in the same cavernous room, while people dressed to the nines look on in wonder and irritation at the casually-clad gamers shouting to be heard over the music.

Schedule

One of the nice things about small conventions is that they tend to have a less hectic pace than the Big Con. At a large convention there are so many things to do, games to play, people to meet, and so much cash leaving your pocket that you feel compelled to play every available session and fill the short intervals between with a hot dog and a quick spin through the dealer's room. Small cons typically run no more than three gaming sessions a day, which leaves an hour or so between sessions to get some real food, see the dealers, catch a show in the movie room or even (GASP!) have time to spend chatting with people. At some conventions games are not held during banquets, art auctions, or masquerades. That helps the attendance at those events.

Take care with this approach, however, as not everyone will want to sit out a session, and the number of active gaming sessions available could affect whether the convention is worth a long drive.

Because attendance is limited at small conventions, it is not necessary to run a great many RPGA™ Network events. We know, we know, how can there be TOO many RPGA Network events? However, if a convention tries to run a half dozen Network scenarios in each time slot, it is unlikely that more than one or two will pull in enough gamers for a tournament. Most well-organized small cons have one, two, or three Network tournaments running each session, with several non-RPGA Network events as alternatives or to handle any overflow. Too many different tournaments at a convention makes it difficult for the convention staff (and Network HQ) to provide scenarios that haven't already been played to death in a region. It also makes it more difficult to find DMs.

It is important at any convention that there be someone responsible for forming teams and matching them with DMs as quickly as possible. This will avoid bored and grumbling gamers and will give everybody as much play time as possible. Something as simple as a sheet of paper stuck to the wall announcing where gamers for each scenario should gather can help tremendously. And it is critical to start and finish on time. We've attended plenty of conventions where people sit around waiting 30 or 40 minutes to play. On the other hand, at Total Confusion this past spring, organizers simply

sent out teams at the scheduled starting time, and latecomers were out of luck. It was amazing how quickly everyone got the message and made sure to show up on time.

Please, whether you are a gamer, judge, or organizer, make sure you are where you are supposed to be when you are supposed to be there.

A convention should, of course, stick to its schedule of events. But if an event has to be canceled or shifted for reasons beyond the control of the convention staff, they should let the gamers know as soon as possible. The Ohio Neo-Con continued for two days to sell tickets and send off gamers for an event they did not have the scenario or DMs for. Gamers can get pretty peeved if you arbitrarily depart from the published schedule.

Once we called a con in South Bend, IN., to ask when they would be running the RPGA™ Network feature tournament. When they said, "Tomorrow at 8 a.m. only," we dutifully arose at 4 a.m. to drive there. On our arrival we discovered they changed their minds and rescheduled the tournament for 1 p.m.—leaving nothing to do until then except play miniatures events. This convention, forever after known to us as "4 a.m. Con," is not on our list for future attendance.

Games

Network headquarters has a good supply of RPGA Network sanctioned tournaments for use at conventions. The scenarios are for a variety of gaming systems.

Many small conventions provide their own, home-written scenarios for their tournaments. This is good, very good. It guarantees that the event is brand new and could attract a bigger audience; lets the convention organizers have more control over the type, size, and number of rounds the tournament will be; and the con schedule can be tailored to fit the games popular in the area. Further, HQ smiles kindly on the convention because they do not have to scramble to find tournaments that have not played in the area and gives the HQ new tournaments to send throughout the world.

A tournament must be submitted to HQ up to six months in advance of a convention. If the scenario is submitted late, it may wind up being run as a non-sanctioned event, having another Network event substituted in its place, or perhaps not even being played at all.

The most organized convention staff distributes to all attendees a gaming schedule and a description of the scenarios to be run, including title, author, game system, and a two-sentence synopsis. This way prospective attendees will know whether they are interested in the games.

People

Some of the nicest people run and attend small conventions. Because the pace tends to be a little slower, people are more sociable. Meeting new people is easy, as there is time before and after games to talk. It is typical to find yourself going out to dinner with people you have just met. Unlike the folks back home in your campaign, many of these people have never heard your favorite war stories. (You'll be expected to listen to theirs, too.) You are also more likely to actually meet and socialize with the convention organizers and the guests of honor.

There are often both scheduled and impromptu parties, swim sessions, card games, and other fun things happening. We hope for your sake that these are in addition to the regular events and not indicative of a poorly-run convention. We once played golf at a convention because an arbitrary schedule change left us with literally nothing else to do. (Hint: bring your own cards and any other games you might want to talk people into.)

Award Ceremonies

Most conventions have awards ceremonies. Everybody is curious about who won the various tournaments and what prizes were awarded by the RPGA Network or by the manufacturers of the game being run—both are more generous than you might guess. But disorganization and long-winded speeches will win no friends. The ceremony should start as soon as possible after the last round is played. Really clever con staffs will have the previous rounds compiled hours ago. Ideally, there will be only one presenter, and the lists and prizes/certificates will be pre-assembled in the correct order. With a simple request, the crowd will be happy to hold their applause for individual winners and simply applaud once per event or category.

Dealers' Room

A well-planned small convention will have a dealers area as close to the gaming rooms as possible. This helps people find it easily and quickly. It also increases traffic flow and keeps the dealers happy. At a well-established small convention there will be several local and even out-of-state dealers to purchase goodies from. At a first-time con there may be no dealers. Ask the con staff in advance if dealers are an important consideration for you.

Other Fun Stuff

Art shows, masquerades, swimming parties, dances, room parties, bull sessions, and impromptu games are more likely to happen at smaller conventions. A few suggestions: make sure that your activities or behavior do not bring down the wrath of the hotel or mundane guests. Swimming parties should be held when the pool is open unless special arrangements have been made with the hotel staff. Room parties can be noisy, so some conventions — such as Glathricon and Contact, both in Evansville, IN.—try to arrange a "noisy hall" with the hotel. People who intend to be rowdy stay there so that mundanes and less convivial gamers can snore peacefully in other areas of the hotel.

If there is to be a dance, don't schedule games in the same room at the same time. Avoid things such as raw liver tosses, going out of your way to offend mundanes, or brandishing weapons (even if they are only made of rubber). Little touches, like a free miniature for everyone who participates in a given tournament, often a fixture at conventions organized by Keith Polster; free soda in the hospitality room, which gamers at Contact have enjoyed for years; airbrushed or printed convention shirts; and the aforementioned eateries map can be really helpful in making a small con a pleasantly memorable experience. The extras also help draw repeat visitors.

If you want to attend a small convention, watch the DRAGON® Magazine and POLYHEDRON™ Newszine convention announcements for those near you, or check for flyers at your local game store. If you want to organize a small con, remember to start early. Tournament requests and publicity should start at least six months in advance. And don't hesitate to write to RPGA Network or your Network Regional Director for help and suggestions. ❑

The Living City

Black Dugal's Music Shoppe

by John Miller and Jim Dawson

Black Dugal's Music Shoppe is in an old two-story stone building near the edge of the middle class business district. The main floor is a single large room cluttered with lutes, recorders, dulcimers, flutes, and other instruments. They rest on stands and tables, lay on the floor, and hang from the ceiling and walls. The only clear spot in the room is a work space in the left rear corner.

Opposite the work area, small stairs lead up to the second floor where the proprietor, "Black Dugal" Buchannan, lives alone. Dugal is always present on the main floor when the store is open. When not helping a customer, he is working diligently to fashion a new instrument or lovingly wiping dust from the instruments already on display.

A glance around the store alerts potential customers that this is the shop of a master craftsman. Dugal uses only the finest materials and spends hours carving and shaping each section of an instrument. Before laying a completed part aside, he examines it carefully. If Dugal finds any flaw, no matter how small, he casts the section aside and begins crafting a replacement.

A single instrument takes from one to 10 months to construct, depending on its size and complexity. Dugal usually is working on several instruments at any given time. The shop usually has on display one to three each of the following:

Item	Cost (gp)
Cittern	250
Dulcimer	300
Flute	250
Harp	450
Lute	225
Lyre	150
Recorder	200

These instruments, fine as they are, are not the true measure of Dugal's skills. Select customers are shown special instruments stored in cases behind the counter. Myriads of tiny runes are etched into the wood of these instruments. Most customers see the runes only as decorative additions to already finely crafted instruments. However, mages who examine them immediately notice a similarity between these runes and ones found on magical scrolls.

The runes are part of a unique process to enchant musical instruments without using high level spells. Each special instrument is endowed with one magical spell of first through third level that can be cast up to three times a day by playing a melody to which the instrument's runes are attuned.

The enchantments require only verbal and somatic components. The runes on the instrument are an inscribed version of a particular spell, and the melody is a repetitive musical rendition of the verbal component. When the melody is played, which takes a full turn, the instrument resonates and activates the runes, thus serving as the somatic component and in effect casting the spell.

Dugal's enchantments are limited to those spells in his spell book. Of these, he uses only defensive or benign spells. A devout individualist and recent pacifist, he never uses a spell such as *charm* that infringes on the freedom of another, or a spell such as *magic missile* that causes harm to another.

Dugal accepts special orders for normal or enchanted items. Enchanted instruments take longer to construct—usually three to 12 months. Currently, there are four enchanted instruments in stock.

Instrument	Enchantment	Cost
Flute	*Knock*	2,600
Lute	*Continual Light*	3,200
Lyre	*Detect Magic*	3,000
Recorder	*Dispel Magic*	3,500

The spell on an enchanted instrument can be invoked by any musician who plays the appropriate melody. Dugal teaches the melody to the buyer at the time of purchase. He also explains to customers that, except for casting time, the capabilities of a spell cast using one of the instruments are exactly as if Dugal cast it himself. Thus, all spells are cast at fifth level.

"Black Dugal" Buchannan

5th Level Half Elf Wizard

STR: 10
INT: 17
WIS: 13
DEX: 18
CON: 10
CHA: 15
AC Normal: 6
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 9
Alignment: Chaotic Good
Languages: Common, Elvish, Gnomish, Halfling, Silver Dragon, Bronze Dragon

Weapon Proficiencies: Staff, Dagger
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Artistic ability (wood crafting) (18), musical instruments (flute, lute, lyre, recorder) (18)
Magic Items: *Ring of warmth, boots of elvenkind*
Spells/day: 4 2 1

Spell Books:

Level One Spells

Change Self
Comprehend Languages
Magic Missile
Sleep
Charm Person
Detect Magic
Read Magic

Level Two Spells

Alter Self
Continual Light
Knock
Blur
Detect Invisibility
Whispering Wind

Level Three Spells

Dispel Magic
Gust Of Wind
Flame Arrow
Tongues

Appearance: Dugal, 47, is tall and thin, standing 6' 6" and weighing 170 lbs. He appears wholly human. His nickname stems from his thick mop of jet-black hair.

Background: From the age of six until he left his home in Ordulin at 22, Dugal was apprenticed to his father, who crafted musical instruments. During the same period, his mother, an elvish bard, insisted that he learn to play

music. Although Dugal followed their teachings he dreamed of becoming a famous adventuring wizard.

After leaving his family to follow his dream, Dugal traveled to Yhuann and apprenticed himself to the mage, Caldan, for six years. His dedication, aided by his high intelligence and dexterity, enabled him to learn spells quickly.

During his apprenticeship, Dugal continued to craft instruments and play music. He played often for Caldan, who became fond of Dugal's music and realized that the half-elf's true talent was in crafting and playing instruments.

When his time with Caldan ended, the master wizard gave Dugal a set of wood crafting tools and wished him well. Dugal journeyed to the small city of Eylea, home of the Avante Guard adventuring company. He hoped to join the Guard, but was rebuffed due to lack of experience. Instead, he became a journeyman wizard in the garrison of Eylea Keep. For two years he endured long hours of boredom, whiling away spare time on his garrison shifts by constructing musical instruments and contemplating. One day, the concept of blending his three skills of wood carving, music, and magic occurred to him. He experimented, and found that he could scribe spells directly onto the instruments. He was working on replacing the verbal components of spells with notes when an attack on Eylea delayed his musings.

The assault by minions and hirelings of an obscure cult was in retribution for the Avante Guard's destruction of one of the cult's temples. Dugal found himself in the thick of the fight. The assault was routed after two days, but not before Dugal saw more drow, ogres, trolls, and demons than most adventurers see in a lifetime. That, and the carnage that remained after the battle, convinced Dugal that he had no taste for blood and gore. He became a pacifist, and "retired" his dream of becoming an adventuring mage.

Dugal had earned enough from his work at Eylea Keep to buy both a small shop and sufficient supplies to construct a small stock of musical instruments. He elected to start his business in Ravens Bluff, where he continues to perfect his talent of enchanting instruments.

Dugal believes his unique ability is a result of his years of intense training in the field of music, crafting musical instruments, and studying magic. He also believes that he may be the only person so blessed.

Dugal does not realize that his multi-talented background alone would never enable him to enchant instruments. No mundane tools, no matter how skilled the artist, could ever inscribe magical runes into wood.

However, Dugal's tools are not mundane. Caldan, in appreciation for his student's musical talents and for his mage abilities, enchanted the tools he gave Dugal.

Dugal is not aware his tools are magical. He knows that they detect as magic, but he believes that is because they have absorbed some magic during their use inscribing the runes. These tools, in combination with his other skills, enable Dugal to create magical musical instruments.

Adventurers who visit Dugal's shop could be hired to find rare woods and metal that the half-elf uses in the construction of his instruments. Dugal also often hires adventurers to transport his best pieces to wealthy customers out of town. ❑

Going To Town

Settlement Generation For The BOOT HILL® Game

by Mark Easterday

Occasionally Game Masters for BOOT HILL® Campaigns need to create towns, settlements, or cities for an upcoming scenario. Game Masters can put a great deal of time and effort into the creation of a populated area — which player characters might only intend to pass through—or, they can use the following random generation system. After determining the size of the community, note how many businesses that community has. Businesses are rolled on the Business Table. Reroll all duplicate business rolls except in a "City."

The community generation system can be altered as desired by the Game Master. Game Masters may wish to make post offices, saloons, and jails automatic features of towns.

Population Size
(Roll d% once)

01-25 — Settlement, 15-100 people, three businesses
26-60 — Town, 101-300 people, eight businesses
61-85 — Boom Town, 301-600 people, 12 businesses
86-100 — City, 600+ people, 15 or more businesses

Building/Business Table

01-15	Saloon
16-25	Hotel
26-40	General Store
41-50	Blacksmith
51-60	Barber
61-65	Corral
66-68	Boarding House
69-72	Brothel
73-78	Bank
79-82	Jail
83-86	Post Office
87	Market
88	Stage Office
89	Train Station
90	Restaurant
91	Bar
92	Photo Studio and/or Newspaper
93	Ranch*
94	Farm*
95	Mine*
96	Outlaw Hideout*
97	Trading Post*
98	Army Post*
99	Indian Reservation*
00	Indian Village*

* These entries on the building/business table should be located just outside a community in an area selected by the Game Master. They could have a significant impact on the population's livelihood and adventures player characters might have there. ❑

The Everwinking Eye

Adventures in Maskyr's Eye

by Ed Greenwood

"Adventures are things farmers and craftsmen have little time for, and merchants can spare few coins toward. That leaves adventure to those unwilling souls who have it thrust upon them—sometimes literally, and to the thugs and fools who enjoy violence and danger or know no other way to feed themselves.

"There are a lot of those, so we have large armies, and lots of bloody adventure. A good thing, too—else what would the farmers, craftsmen, and merchants have to talk about, in the taverns at night?"

Shavryn Ilidar, High Priest of Ilmater; from Life On The Rack, *(chapbook) Year of the Falling Tower*

The famous wandering "Healer of the High Roads," Ilidar the Brave, still is remembered in the Dragon Reach and Northern Sword Coast for happening along when wounded adventurers needed help, and giving coins, healing, and food kindly and freely. The aged Ilidar now runs a large, powerful temple of Ilmater in Arrabar, on the Vilhon Reach. His words herald a selection of adventures based in Maskyr's Eye. We've already seen something of this not-so-quiet village, and there's more to see ere blades are drawn and spells hurled. So let's look around "the Eye" one last time.

A Last Look Around The Eye

There is little grand or remarkable in Maskyr's Eye. The simple stone, timber, and thatch barns, houses, and privies don't change much, no matter how often one looks at them. No map is needed to guide the curious explorer along the trade road, between the sprawling farms and simple homes. What remains for a DM to see, to bring the village to life? Why, the people, of course. We've names and officials enough, but we've not yet looked at the *character* of the vale-folk.

Maskyrvians have a laconic sense of humor. A favorite saying, for example, when viewing something that is tattered, damaged, or filthy—the taproom of *The Wizard's Hand* after a brawl, for instance or the appearance of a farmer who has fallen into his own privy—is, "Ah! 'Tis the latest style in Alphar Isle." A bedraggled traveler or a couple encountered partially clad in the woods may well be greeted with the solemn query: "The latest style in Alphar Isle, no?"

Alphar Isle is one of the Pirate Isles in The Sea of Fallen Stars; on the detailed double-map in the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ boxed Campaign Set, it's the large island just east of the channel known as "The Windrace." Pirates (I'll say more about them in a later column) traditionally put ashore captives and comrades who were too sick or injured to sail with them, or who carry contagious diseases on Alphar Isle. These unfortunates often starve or resort to cannibalism, and are usually half-naked before long, as their clothes fall apart. On several occasions when pirates ransomed valuable captives, they revealed that a captive could be picked up on Alphar Isle—and out of coarse humor have stripped the important nobleman or lady and left the victim to be found stark naked. Word of this obviously reached Maskyr's Eye some time ago.

Natives of Maskyr's Eye who find it necessary to throw a punch or draw sword at an outlander may well ask, "Nice weather we're having, no?," as they do so. This habit probably came from the small talk of strangers, who always seem to discuss the weather. Someone who is tight with money or tries to cheat on a bargain may be asked, "Not from Mulmaster, are ye?," or, "Ye were born in Mulmaster, no?" To call someone a Mulmasterite who is not is a deadly insult among the vale folk. Like other folk of the rural Vast, Maskyrvians also view the citizens of Calaunt in an unfavorable light. Anyone acting in an arrogant, dangerously silly, or foolish manner is called a "Calaunt-head," or told to "go on an outing to Calaunt." The vale folk also have very little use for those who mistreat animals. A man who kicks or strikes a local's animal probably will be attacked; one who mistreats his own beast in front of a vale farmer may well be asked levelly, "Kick yer wife, too?"

Adventures In The Vale

The Mage's Tower

Due west of Kurth, on the fringes of The Flooded Forest, is a lone stone tower. It has windows at its spired top (seventy feet in the air) which are sometimes lit, is roughly built of massive stones, and has no visible door. Its base is guarded by a stone golem, which attacks anyone *touching the tower or trying to climb*, levitate, or fly up alongside it—if the intruder approaches within 40' and the golem can reach the creature. It strikes at such targets until they cease to move or flee beyond 200' from the tower. Locals avoid the tower, and talk little of it. Those who do offer several identities for the isolated tower. It is said to be the abode of a powerful mage. Some say (falsely) that Maskyr moved here as men settled in his vale, leaving his former tower (see issue #54) as a trap. Others hold that a mind flayer dwells there, or that even stranger creatures (wind walkers, penanggalan, slithering trackers, even weredragons) lair in the tower. Others say that clever dwarves live in the tower, and have hired mages to guard it for them with spells—especially illusions of guardian monsters. Still others say that one Lashan dwells there, either as master or guest. (Lashan is a former Lord of Scardale who briefly held much of the Dalelands in a shaky empire, and vanished recently when his empire collapsed.) Any or all of these things might be true.

The minstrel Lieshann of Ordulin believes the tower is the entrance to the lair of a gold dragon (or perhaps a wyrm of greater power) who enters in shape-changed form. Lieshann admits, however, that she has only seen the tower from afar. A track leads to it from Ylraphon (once a much larger city than it is now. Its northeastern verges are being fast overgrown by the forest), and Lieshann mistook the track for a trail to Kurth.

Lieshann wanders the Dragon Reach lands, and might sing of the mysterious tower at an inn or tavern, where PCs could hear her.

Lieshann's tale, however, is certainly wrong. Anyone flying or otherwise avoiding the golem and approaching the

tower's three large, arched windows meets three gargoyles flying out to attack and drive intruders away. They also silently fly through the tower's passages and rooms to attack anyone gaining entrance to the tower by digging, magic, or another way.

Within the tower, adventurers would find nothing but empty, dusty rooms and corridors — and floor and stair sections that flip over to deposit the unwary in pit traps and the like.

The master of the tower could be hiding, along with all belongings and treasure, in the tower walls. Perhaps wearing a *ring of spell turning*. The master could be a wizard employing *polymorph* magics to emulate a lurker above or similar creature, resembling the stone walls of the tower and with attacks of its own. Or the wizard could be hiding in a cavity whose entrance is concealed by an intelligent, loyal mimic whose body resembles the adjacent stone wall or ceiling.

Maskyr's Staff

The ex-thief Khonduil has a twisted right leg, the result a long fall followed by an unsatisfactory convalescence. He now hobbles about with the aid of a staff. Bearded, good-natured, and seemingly frail, he appears anything but a onetime thief. Khonduil lives simply in a hut in Maskyr's Eye. In the one-room hut is a wooden bowl, a large covered water bowl and ewer, a cot, spare robes, a strongbox containing bread and cheese, and an iron coffer containing offerings to Tymora (see issue #55). Its usual contents are about 26 gp, 12 sp, and 10 cp.

Khonduil keeps just enough offering money to buy food and gives the rest to an underpriest sent out from the temple in Mulmaster. This priest, one Dzurdan Crommarch, is 6th level and travels by horse with two 2nd level followers and four men-at-arms. He comes regularly (usually every twenty days), and will grimly pursue and hunt down anyone who robs or harms Khonduil, or vandalizes the shrine he tends.

Under the well-packed dirt floor of Khonduil's hut there is a lead-lined coffin that contains three bags of gold (each of 100 gp) and a small coffer of rubies (twelve stones, each worth 5,000 gp). The coffin also holds the staff of Maskyr, a *staff of power* with 11 charges left. Khonduil will trade the staff to anyone who fully heals him. He does not reveal before the healing just where the staff is hidden or how he got it.

Khonduil has magically linked himself to the staff by means of a mysterious process known only to a few learned mages, sages, and priests. This process involves a few drops of the user's blood and a matched pair of magical cords (one tied to the staff and one around Khonduil's right ankle, under his worn, floppy boots). Once every two rounds, Khonduil can call on one of the staff's magical powers as if he is a wizard holding the staff. He cannot make a retributive strike, or use the staff's smiting power. Although each use drains charges in the normal manner, no words or gestures are necessary. Removal of either cord will cause both cords to crumble to dust, and the link will be ended.

Maskyrians know that Khonduil has some sort of magical powers (he once defended himself and the shrine from brigands with a *fireball*. But they have no idea the old cleric has Maskyr's staff. Khonduil gained the staff by using a *potion of invisibility* to enter Maskyr's Tower on the heels of Gathen Swiftsword. Gathen was torn literally limb from limb by a guardian creature in an upper chamber; Khonduil sneaked past and laid hands on the staff and a wand of some sort. After dealing with Gathen, the creature turned menacingly and began looking about for a new victim, so Khonduil aimed the wand at it and spoke the word carved into its handle. The gargoyle-like guardian thing grew before his eyes into a great dragon (its real form, Khonduil believes) and burst the tower asunder, roaring in triumph. Khonduil lost the wand in the fall but retained the staff. When he found the Tower largely gone, and astonished soldiers encamped all around, he went elsewhere, to seek treasure in quieter places.

Khonduil returned to Maskyr's Eye only later, when his thieving career was ended. He was climbing hand-over-hand along a rope hung from tower to tower in the richest area of Iriaebor, a heavy bag of coins on his back. But a guard's crossbow bolt transfixed his forearm, breaking both it and his grip on the rope. The thief fell to the courtyard far below, the coins landing on his right leg and breaking it. He had to drag himself hastily to a nearby canal to avoid being caught and slain, swim away despite the pain—and worst of all, leave the coins behind.

Khonduil believes that the majority of Maskyr's treasure remains unfound. He thinks the farmer who saw the glowing door in midair (Udzgul Thairharrow, now deceased) may have been right. A permanent *gate* or portal to another location (perhaps a plane away or at the far reaches of Faerun, perhaps a cavern deep beneath the bluff the Tower stood on) still might exist. Once just a door or wall in the Tower (probably concealed behind a tapestry), it now hangs in empty air, invisible save to those who have the proper means to look for it. Khonduil would like to find out the truth, after all these years, but doesn't want to get killed finding out. He often talks to travelers, minstrels, and his fellow vale folk about Maskyr's unrecovered treasure (in the name of Tymora, Patron Goddess of Adventurers), but is careful never to reveal that he was present when the Tower was destroyed, or let slip any hint of his former profession. The nature and location of the treasure (and Maskyr) is up to the DM.

Current Clack

*Strange creatures have begun to appear in the Dragon Reach and Northern Sword Coast, monsters never seen in the Realms before. The creatures seem to be coming from the Border Forest and the Lurkwood, respectively — and the steady stream of creatures argues that some sort of magical source for the creatures is hidden there. Too many creatures have emerged for them all to have found food enough to grow to their present sizes in the woods. And many hunters and inhabitants familiar with the two woodlands attest that they've never seen such creatures before. The creatures are said to include flying, winged undead; flying troll-like creatures; silent predators that resemble clouds of smoke with multiple clam-shaped jaws on retractable arms; and two-headed intelligent snakes with tentacles and magical abilities. ❑

Word Search

Delving The Dungeon For The Right Answers

by Fran Hart

L A T N E M E L E R S N O P Y N E O T Y U G H L D
O G R T Y T P Q A C B A I R T D V G R V E O Y X T
L E Z D U A R V E R U T N E V D A D A K O B O L D
T R E A N T T E L O N Y S T D O M I P Y R L Q S I
H L D O D Y H D Z E R I G S E J P V W H A I G R P
G N A X E K B L M X E Z A N C U I T T E V N R D I
M J A T A C S N R V Y Q U O F D R N Y G I W O P S
A I L F D E G O J C T I A M A T E O N L S M L N T
U W S M O I K G Y P S D B B C U G M F I H A R P Y
V H N R L L G A R G O Y L E A N A L O D I M A O X
O P O A Z R T R E A S U R E C I A G E W E M W E T
T T A N I Q R D L T E F H E T H E R E A L D U M I
A N A G A T T H N G T E J U C Y N E S R D L N T O
W O F M M Z A X M D E T Y K T T W Z I M A X O K L
O R C Z B I M U I R E H T I H C U L A B Z M R M I
A D Y C T V M X U N Z D O I G Q H A N E R T N V A
L E A H A M O Y V S L U R T I S H A T Z T E I M P
W H R A Y B T A F W I N L L F L E T O H S P R P M
E Y X R S G H I R M A G I C H A P T W I P T V S N
C L R Y T S H A E H R E T C A R A H C R E Y A L P
V O L D W R A I M D R O W S C O E I N S L X N D S
R P A L A D I N C K A N O C N E G E T S L I A G N
H N O M K G E H K H N A R G A D N F P H S G M E O

The following words can be found in the puzzle. They are hidden in many directions—horizontally, vertically, and diagonally — but always in a straight line. The answers will appear in the next issue of the POLYHEDRON™ Newszine.

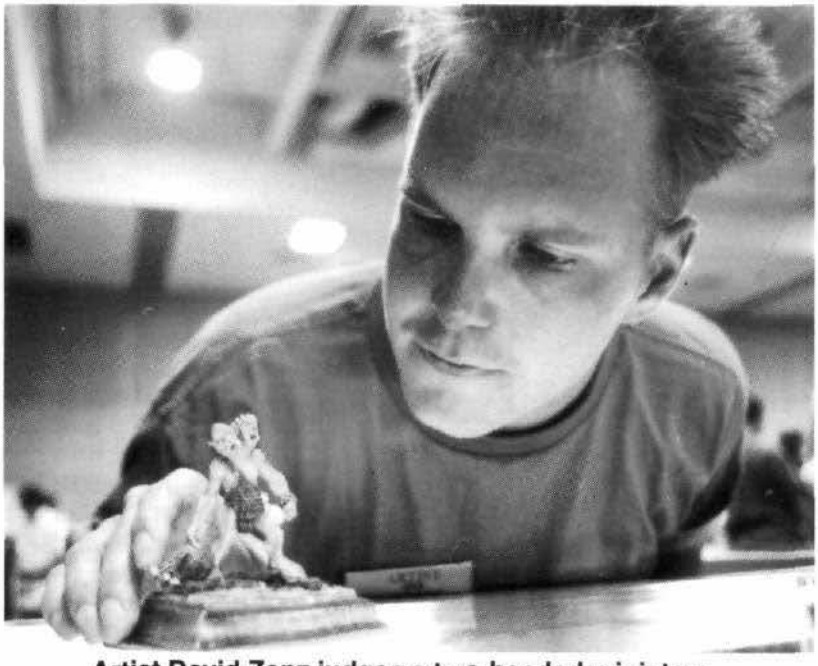
Adventure
Alignment
Anhkheg
Baluchitherium
Djinni
Dragon
Drow
Dungeon
Dwarf
Eel
Elemental
Elf
Ethereal
Ettin
Fighter
Gargoyle
GEN CON
Wraith
Giant
Goblin
Halfling
Harpy
Imp
Kobold
Lolth
Magic
Mammoth
Monster
Mummy
Naga
Neotyugh
Nirvana
Ogre
Orc
Paladin
Player Character
Polyhedron
Ranger
Shield
Slaad
Spells
Styx
Sword
Sylph
Thief
Tiamat
Treant
Treasure
Tyr
Undead
Unicorn
Vampire

GEN CON® 1990

Julie Guthrie looks over her sculpture.

Fluffy Quest author Rick Reid takes time to play. Below, Skip Williams hands Australian Regional Director Wes Nicholson a "mug of bear" award.

Regional directors cut the Network's anniversary cake.



Artist David Zenz judges a two-headed miniature.

Notes from HQ

Continued from page 4

This year's Gaming Decathlon for Network clubs is winding down. We will have the winners announced soon. Plans already are being made for next year's Clubs Gaming Decathlon. Here are the events, as selected by the Network Advisory Committee: Winter Fantasy Game Triad, Glathricon Benefit Tournament, Ghengis Khan BOOT HILL® game event, ConConn Call of Cthulhu tournament, GEN CON® Game Fair Club Competition, tournament writing contest, skit competition at GEN CON Game Fair, character creation, spell design, and Living City Neighbors. The times and dates for each event will be posted in mailings to Network clubs.

Membership Drive

Our next membership drive is for Network Clubs. The club which recruits the most members between December 1st, 1990, and March 1st, 1991, will receive a trophy, a $100 gift certificate to the Mail Order Hobby Shop, and a free renewal of its club membership. The second place club will receive a $50 gift certificate and a free renewal of its club membership. Details of the drive are available from club presidents.

One More Contest

This month's contest is detailed near the back of the Newszine. We decided to populate Ravens Bluff's harbor, and we thought Network members should do the work (and therefore have the fun). The deadline is short, so think fast.

Take Care,

Jean and Skip ❑

New Rogues Gallery

Continued from page 21

Appearance: Rezhyk is tall, slender, and deceptively strong. He has black hair and piercing black eyes. His skin is swarthy in color, but his face is handsome in a cruel sort of way. Although Rezhyk is actually 45, he appears to be in his early to mid 20s because of *potions of longevity.*

Background: Rezhyk, a native of Khashta'anian, became a wizard and a priest because he was determined to have the best of both worlds. He studied anything magical that crossed his path, having no mentor to train him. He spent countless hours in the dusty libraries of minor lords and squires, where he passed himself off as a tutor to the lords' young sons. When the evil mage Ramallion came to power and usurped the kingdom, Rezhyk privately rejoiced, as he idolized the corrupt man. However, when Ramallion was finally overthrown and killed, Rezhyk vowed to become powerful enough to someday raise the sorcerer back to life. To this end he secretly obtained Ramallion's skull to aid in resurrecting his hero. ❑

Mary Zalapi, Jay Tummelson, Rich Bingle, and Norm Ritchie (in the dress) perform in the skit competition.

TSR, Inc.'s Jack Beuttell meets with Randy Moering and his hearing guide dog Kim. Randy, who is deaf, received Kim from Okada, a hearing guide dog training school in Fontana, WI. The Network raised $1,600 for Okada from its GEN CON® Game Fair Benefit Tournament. Randy and Kim were on hand to accept the donation.

Jeff Tressler portrays a 7-year-old in The Living City event.

The GEnie™ Unleashed

An Offer For Computer Buffs

by J. Paul LaFountain

When I first signed on as a game designer at TSR, Inc. in February 1990, I was impressed with the operation here. There were computers and product group meetings, executives and gaming celebrities. And in the midst of all of this, it wasn't long before I found GEnie.

For those of you who don't know, GEnie is General Electric's multi-system, multi-user computer telecommunications network. And your first question is, "What does that big long fancy term mean to me?"

As stated in the GEnie users' manual:

GEnie is a full-service communications, information, and entertainment network that takes your home or business computer far beyond the capabilities of its software and peripherals. A simple telephone call connects your computer with GEnie's computer system. Once connected, you'll have full command of an incredible array of information and services.

Here is a small sample of what you can do on GEnie:

- Review the latest news, weather, and sports stories
- Instant access to stock, commodity and money market information
- Shop for bargain-priced computer software, hobby equipment, and more
- Make your vacation reservations—from plane, to rental car to hotel
- Research some of the world's most sophisticated databases
- Chat with other GEnie members from all over the world

You also can get answers to your computing questions from hardware and software manufacturers, learn the latest photography tips, have a dogfight in a WWII Spitfire, and access many other activities.

I bet your next question is, "Ok, neat, but what does this do for me as an RPGA™ Network member and a gamer?"

TSR, Inc. runs an entire area of GEnie that is open to game enthusiasts the world over. Services offered include: a complete bulletin board containing postings on all aspects of TSR games and gaming; a LiveWire™ Chat Area where an unlimited number of GEnie users can meet in three different "rooms;" live online games including ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game, BUCK ROGERS® XXVc™ game, and GAMMA WORLD® game held approximately four times a week; an extensive software library containing DRAGON® Magazine articles, transcripts from past online games, user-created software files, and more; monthly guest speakers such as Jim Ward, Doug Niles, R.A. Salvatore, and Roger Moore; Mail Order Hobby Shop online where you can order directly using a credit card (and get your 10% Network discount); and the opportunity to comment directly to TSR about game products.

Another attraction of the TSR RoundTable™ on GEnie is the upcoming Online Dungeon Master Assistant. Mark Jacobs of Adventures Unlimited Software, Inc. is currently programming the DM Assistant. The program will greatly automate and speed up online game playing and offer a variety of character creation, dungeon creation, and game play options to both the player and Dungeon Master. We hope to see this software available on GEnie in November or December.

Network members will be able to play in officially sanctioned tournaments online. Gary Haynes, the west coast Regional Director for the Network and a TSR RoundTable staff member, is currently preparing a BUCK ROGERS® XXVc™ game tournament that will be available only within the electronic walls of GEnie.

To top things off, GEnie is lowering its rates.

Previously, GEnie usage required a $29.95 sign on fee, plus $6.00 per hour for 1200 baud and $10.00 per hour for 2400 baud. Now, GEnie will no longer have a $29.95 sign on fee, and all modem speeds will be $6.00 per hour. Users will be charged a monthly subscription fee of $4.95, but this will allow you to use more than 25% of GEnie's service at no cost (no $6.00 per hour charge). This low rate is available from 6 p.m. local time to 8 a.m. Prime time phone rates are $18 an hour.

The areas of GEnie that will be free of the $6.00 per hour charge will include: GE Mail™, all administration functions, reading the online GEnie users' manual, feedback to GEnie customer service, GEnie's online encyclopedia, American Airlines EASSY SABRE ticket booking (of course you'll still have to pay for the ticket), and more than dozens of professional bulletin boards (BBs) including the science fiction BB, the writers' BB, the law BB, the medical BB, the sports BB, and more.

You can access a GEnie carrier by dialing 1-800-638-8369. When you connect enter "HHH" and hit enter. At the "U#" prompt, enter "XTX99508,TOPGUN" and hit enter. You will then be sent through the new user routine and have an account prepared for you. You must have a major credit card or a checking account to use GEnie.

Once you have your own account set up, you can enter "TSR" and then hit enter at any GEnie prompt and you will move to the TSR RoundTable. ❑

GEnie, GE Mail, RoundTable, and LiveWire are trademarks of General Electric Company, U.S.A. BUCK ROGERS and XXVc are trademarks used under license from the Dille Family Trust.

WOLFF & BYRD
COUNSELORS OF THE MACABRE
KNOW YE ATTORNEYS WHOSE CLIENTELE GO BUMP IN THE NIGHT,
THEY'VE HAD CASES WHICH HAVE MADE OTHER LAWYERS TURN WHITE;
by BATTON LASH
NOT THAT THERE'S ANYTHING TO FEAR FROM THIS AMICABLE WRAITH,
EXCEPT IT'S PRO BONO, ITS FEE WAIVED IN GOOD FAITH.
© 1990 BATTON LASH
THIS CLIENT IS SWEET AND GOOD NATURED (ITS DISPOSITION CAN'T BE BEAT)
BUT ITS PRESENCE IS THREATENED BY THE GHOULS ON THE STREET.
IT SAYS AN ANNUAL RITUAL MAKES IT HARD TO EXIST,
AND BEGS THE LAWYERS TO FILE A CEASE AND DESIST.
ALAS, THERE'S NO CONTRACT OR STATUTE TO CREATE A LIEN,
PEOPLE GET WEIRD THIS SEASON -- STRANGER THAN HALLOWEEN!
GARISH LIGHTS AND TALISMANS SPRANG FROM A TREE,
WHILE BLOOD-SUCKERS ABOUND, EYEING PREY WITH GLEE.
$15-$20
$5-$10
THIS RITE TURNS MEN INTO MONSTERS -- NO CHOICE BUT TO LOCK THE DOORS,
THEY'RE NO BETTER THAN ZOMBIES (JUST ASK THE COUNSELORS!)
CLICK
AS MIDNIGHT APPROACHES YOU'RE BOUND TO HEAR:
CLOSED?
@★#?!! IT'LL BE DIFFERENT NEXT YEAR!
WAILING AND MOANING, THEY RETREAT... AND NOT ONE AMONG THEM WOULD E'ER ADMIT IT,
BUT THEY MAKE Christmas SO MISERABLE, LAWYERS ARE CALLED TO DEFEND THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT.
AS KIDS THEY LOVED ME -- BUT NOW... :choke:
LOOK AT THE EVIDENCE, WOLFF... IT'S OVERWHELMING!
BYRD, IT'S ANOTHER CASE WHERE THE VICTIM WILL BE BLAMED

WOLFF & BYRD COUNSELORS OF THE MACABRE ARE FEATURED IN EVERY ISSUE OF THE NATIONAL LAW JOURNAL, BROOKLYN RIVIERE PUBLICATIONS, AMERICAN FANTASY AND POLYNESIAN NEWSLINE